

RIGHTVIEWQUARTERLY

DHARMA IN PRACTICE

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ON THE COVER: Sculptor Shinjo Ito created this wood carving, Horyu Kuon, in 1968. The work symbolizes the artist's hope that the chain of transmission which has faithfully handed down Shakyamuni's teachings for over 2500 years will remain unbroken. In English the four characters say: "Eternal is the dharma stream."

The carving is part of an exhibition currently on a world tour, *The Vision and Art of Shinjo Ito*. For more information go to www.shinjoito.com.



Editor XIANYANG CARL JEROME claims that real happiness comes from the cushion, not from our thinking mind.

*Words! Words! Words! I'm so sick of words!
I get words all day through;
First from him, now from you!
Is that all you blighters can do?*
—Eliza in My Fair Lady

The answer to Eliza's question is "Yes, that's about the only thing anyone does."

In Buddhist philosophy, however, there is another answer: *meditate*. For only with meditation can we end our confusion and suffering. If words alone could do it, we would have done it long ago; if some intellectual understanding were all it took, we would have thought our way out of samsara eons ago. The discursive mind, however, is not enough.

To end our suffering, we must develop our meditation and the new awareness that arises from meditation. This new awareness, which arises from right concentration, is an awareness that experiences the world without producing dukkha. We are no longer manhandled and jerked around by every sensory perception, instead to walk a new path that is tranquil and peaceful. At last, we really see the mountain.

As the Buddha said on his deathbed, we should value every moment of this precious life, a life in which the development of wisdom is truly possible, and we should practice, practice, practice toward that end.

There are two aspects to Buddhist meditation: one is the calming aspect that occurs when we watch our breath; the other is the development of insight. The purpose of our practice, then, is to become calm enough to see clearly and to develop the insight necessary to liberate us from ignorance and craving.

And words alone cannot deliver us to freedom. For that, we need a daily meditation practice—meaning sitting for 40 minutes to an hour once or twice a day. Words can then be used to support the practice on the cushion in a way that furthers it, rather than hinders it. It would be silly, wouldn't it, not to use study and understanding to support our meditation practice?

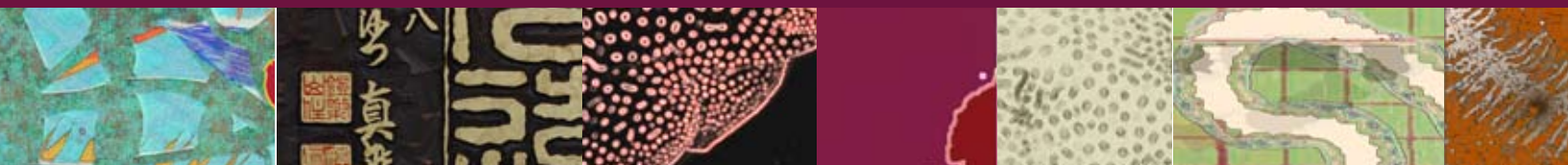
We cannot hope to be successful on the cushion, however, if we are entrenched in our traditional patterns, like greed (seeking more of what we like and avoiding things we don't like), anger, pride, jealousy, and sensual pleasures. So we must try to reduce these in our everyday lives in support of our sitting. A metta practice can be beneficial in this, so can certain chanting practices, as well as certain contemplative practices.

Meditating in this way teaches us that real happiness comes from within, from the meditative mind. And once we understand this, we are inspired us to practice more and more diligently and with greater and greater effort, and our lives lighten and become joyful.

Xianyang Carl Jerome is the editor of Rightview Quarterly magazine and Rightview Online.org. You may contact him with comments, suggestions, and practice questions at editor@rightviewonline.org.

Articles and stories in Rightview Quarterly are centered around the core teachings of the Buddhadharma and are supplemented by supporting commentaries, essays, and poetry. They are selected from the teachings of all three major traditions: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana, and are presented without judgment. They are not meant for comparison, either with each other or with your own practice. They are meant simply to shed light on the path.

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dharmā in practice

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR...

It seems we have a lot
to offer when we give
up everything, as
Zuiko Redding
shows here in the
father-son story
of the Buddha
and Rahula.



Rahula was the Buddha's son, born just before his home-leaving. He was about eight years old when his father returned to Kapilavastu to visit his family and teach for a few weeks. The Buddha and his followers settled into a grove on the city's outskirts and the Buddha made a visit to his family. As he sat down, Rahula's mother told their son, "This, Rahula, is your father. Go and ask him for your inheritance."

Rahula approached his father and greeted him, "Pleasant is your shadow, recluse." The Buddha must have sensed that something was up, for he rose and left. His son followed, saying, "Give me my inheritance, recluse, give me my inheritance, recluse."

Rahula was not going to let go, no matter what. Rejection didn't matter – he'd just follow along and ask again. This is the determination of Bodhidharma's frown and the straight back of a Zen monk – the determination to seek the truth that will carry us forward in our practice. If we don't have it, we'll turn away at the first hard spot – well, maybe the second. This single-minded desire in the face of all obstacles is called "raising Bodhi Mind." Without it, we let rejection and inconvenience get in our way. With it, life is less convenient, but much more fulfilling.

Seeing his son's single-mindedness, the Buddha allowed him to join the sangha. He was ordained by Shariputra, who was his main teacher during his childhood.

Did this kid know what he was getting into? The cold nights in a hard bed, the myriad rules? He probably was clueless. When I was about Rahula's age sometimes my parents would have a special book or an interesting snack. "I want some, too, I want some, too," I'd demand. Weary of my persistence, my mom or

dad would let me sample the treasured thing. Oooh! Ugh! James Thurber. Club soda. French bread. I would quietly give it back and slink off. Rahula, though, when he got his wish didn't give his robe back or slink off.

Like Rahula, we commit ourselves to things—marriage, a career—that look pretty wonderful until we're right in the middle. Suddenly we are very intimate with the hardness of it all, the work to be done, and we don't feel so good anymore. Can we put aside our ideas and be with the situation just as it is? When things are totally beyond our control, can we single-mindedly continue on, moment by moment, with no thought of leaving? This is setting aside ego, and when we can do it, we live the Buddha's life. At eight years old, Rahula did this.

This does not mean we are saints. Rahula wasn't, either. He developed a habit of lying, and he sometimes wished his father were still a powerful ruler. Like most of us, he wasn't too interested in letting go of his destructive habits, but his father each time showed him a more constructive way, teaching him to use mindfulness and zazen to take care of problems. Again, Rahula showed determination. In one sutra, he is eighteen and, having been corrected by his father, he sits down by the side of the road in zazen, determined to deal with himself. When Shariputra comes along and gives him some further instructions, he accepts and follows them. With his determination, Rahula became a great bodhisattva and a great teacher.

We're in the same boat. We lie, we think about how it would be if we were really the long lost child of a great person and not part of this really dismal family. This is just how we are—we are human—and, like the Buddha did for Rahula, we can kindly correct ourselves.

To make this continuous single-minded effort is to live the Buddha's life and realize the Buddha's peace. It's very simple, gentle, and supremely difficult.



Zuiko Redding is the resident teacher of Cedar Rapids Zen Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In 1992 she was ordained in Japan by Rev. Tsugen Narasaki, practicing under his direction at Zuioji Monastery and its mountain training center, Shogoji, where she received teaching transmission in 1996. She is a member of the American Zen Teachers' Association.



The Nine Abiding Minds

By Master Ji Ru

From a dharma talk given
at the Mid-America Buddhist
Association on April 29, 2007.

The nine abiding minds describe the basic technique of sitting meditation in both the Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Nine abiding minds is a step-by-step technique of bringing the mind into deeper states of concentration. Before we talk about this practice, though, we would usually mention certain preliminary factors or requirements, such as having faith in the practice, good health, and a strong desire to learn, practice, and integrate the teachings of the dharma into one's life. Also mentioned would be a person's ability to understand the nature of the phenomenon of arising and passing away. Another prerequisite is having a noble teacher for guidance. We need these conditions to help us come together with the practice.

1. INWARD ABIDING
2. CONTINUOUS ABIDING
3. CALM ABIDING
4. ABIDING NEARBY
5. HARMONIZED ABIDING
6. ABIDING IN QUIETUDE
7. SUPREME QUIETUDE
8. SINGLE-POINTED CONCENTRATION
9. MAINTAINING EQUANIMITY WITHOUT ACTION

THESE METHODS OF CESSATION,
TAUGHT BY THE SAGES,
ARE THE NINE STAGES OF MENTAL ABIDING.

Now to begin our topic of the nine abiding minds: How does the mind exercise or perform in this so-called human brain? We know that we generally let our minds run free. However, in Buddhism the practitioner is required not to allow the mind to run free. A free mind, in this sense, does not bring calmness or the highest knowledge. In Chinese Buddhism we say when you let your mind run free there is no government in your mind. Therefore, you don't guide your mind properly. The result is that the mind only attends to dukkha, not sukkha. In dukkha you allow the mind to be unsatisfactory (in a state of suffering), always resulting in stress and distress. On the other hand, in sukkha, the mind attends to the opposite, to true happiness or liberation.

1. INWARD ABIDING

The first abiding mind is called inward abiding. When we're talking about practice, in general people have a mind that they let loose to focus on external information; they pay attention to external phenomenon. For example, in America we want to be polite and show that we are paying attention to people during conversations. This attention to communication usually does not bring calmness or peacefulness. Often conversations will make the mind more skeptical and scattered. Our minds have difficulty concentrating because the object of our focus is constantly changing.

Inward abiding is the opposite of this usual outward focus of the mind on external experience. During inward abiding the mind is focused in the here-and-now on the practice of observing the arising and falling of the breath. Inward abiding means we bring our mindfulness to look inward at the body and mind. **In this meditative form, our usual technique is to focus on the four foundations of mindfulness: mindfulness of the body as body, mindfulness of feeling as feeling, mindfulness of the mind as mind, and mindfulness of the object of mind as to what it is. For example, the first point is mindfulness to the body.** While sitting in inward abiding we don't let our mind scatter or break out all over the place. In this way, we use mindfulness to bring the mind's attention back to the focus on the body as seen in the rising and falling of the breath.



**...We use
mindfulness
to bring
the mind's
attention back
to the focus
on the body
as seen in
the rising and
falling of the
breath.**

**...in continuous
abiding we find it
easier to return
our mind to
the focal point
of the body.**



**In calm abiding
you can more
easily correct
the mind and
help it to return
to the object
of focus.**

2. CONTINUOUS ABIDING

The second abiding state is continuous abiding. Here we focus on our body, moment to moment, and do not let go. As the breathing slows down, the mind will slow its own repetitive action. From our previous observation we know that the mind is really active. Our sense doors are especially open to external information. It is the old habit of focusing externally. If we change this habit into a new practice, while in the state of continuous abiding, we will begin to feel a type of happiness. So our practice of continuous abiding allows us to penetrate more deeply into the inner mind. **Our focus becomes aware of the body as if one were training oneself as an unyielding force. In this case the force is one of surrendering, abandoning, and renouncing the attraction to the external.**

Buddha uses the simile of a dog being tied to a post. At first the mind will be quite challenged, and as a result the mind will struggle against the chain. However, in continuous abiding we find it easier to return our mind to the focal point of the body. We are more able to remind ourselves to be mindful of the object of meditation. As the practice continues there is an easier unification of the mind and the object, the focus is more centered on the mind knowing the body: mindful, mindful; knowing, knowing. In this type of continuous abiding, when we are sitting in the meditation hall, it is not that we are doing nothing, but that we are seriously being mindful in abiding and knowing, in being aware of the body.

3. CALM ABIDING

The third step is calm abiding. This important stage is when inward abiding and continuous abiding are practiced with success, that is, until slowly the mind is again overcome with thoughts. In calm abiding you can more easily correct the mind and help it to return to the object of focus. This resetting of the mind is called calm abiding. We know that when the mind is not calm either many improper thoughts prevail, or the mind is easily influenced to continue contacting external objects. When the object of our focus changes rapidly from one object to next, we call this 'losing the mind.' **Calm abiding is the opposite of losing the mind because the mind is determined to stay focused one-pointed on the object.** Although the meditator is not one hundred percent able to do this, in calm abiding the practitioner is more easily able to reset the mind on the body during practice than before.

4. ABIDING NEARBY

During our practice we continue contemplating the steps of inward abiding, continuous abiding, and calm abiding. We practice and notice how the mind's old habits are replaced by this new conditioning. These practices lead to abiding nearby, which means that the mind calmly abides close to the meditation object. The mind no longer becomes disturbed. In abiding nearby our mindful memory no longer forgets the object of meditation. When the habitual, uninstructed mind-tendency wants to fasten to something external, the mind is now able to remove the wasteful thinking, not allowing itself to become distracted by external information. **Abiding nearby means that we come very close to the object of our concentration, and the mind does not stray far from its focus.**

In one sense, abiding nearby is very different from the beginning three steps of inward abiding, continuous abiding, and calm abiding. In the three beginning steps you force yourself to avoid all the disturbances. By avoiding distractions and by controlling the mind, we are able to follow the rising and ceasing that usually disrupts our attempts to remain mindful of the intended object. In the stage of abiding nearby, the mind has an abundance of energy to focus itself. We no longer need to force the mind to remain focused. The mind is able to awaken before an improper thought rising. The mind is no longer making things up –no longer entertaining fantasies.

5. HARMONIZED ABIDING

The fifth stage is called harmonized abiding. **When we are abiding nearby, the mind, body, and breathing are each very clear in every moment. The coarse and intermediate mind-states are becoming calmer.** In harmonized abiding, however, even the deeper, subtle mind-state, which functions to balance the mind, body, and breathing, becomes pacified. In this more subtle mind-state right knowledge begins to emerge. Right knowledge does not come from our discursive thinking process, the usual rising and ceasing of discriminating thoughts. Our usual active mind, although intelligent about worldly phenomena, is still too scattered, too coarse to penetrate to a deeper experience. In harmonized abiding we begin to experience this deeper knowing of the mind-state. Right knowledge allows us to experience an initial realization of the four noble truths for ourselves, to see more clearly the eightfold path, the three dharma seals, and the twelve links of dependent origination. We actually have different feelings about our life.

When we sit we know that we are in control of our own mental reactions; we can guide our mind. Our mindfulness will be stronger as a result of this technique. This stronger mindfulness is what we call the "linking of the sequence of the abiding minds from the first step to the fifth step."

In the stage of abiding nearby, the mind has an abundance of energy to focus itself.



Our usual active mind, although intelligent about worldly phenomena, is still too scattered, too coarse to penetrate to a deeper experience. In harmonized abiding we begin to experience this deeper knowing of the mind-state.

**We love this moment
for in this moment
there are no longer
any distractions.**



**The mindfulness is
strong enough to
immediately dispel and
eliminate the errors of
the mind.**

The results of experiencing this mind-state are obvious to us and to others. We can tell the difference between when we have a daily practice of deeper abiding or not. This result will bring up some new feelings of tranquility and joy from a deeper level. So we say that harmonized abiding is a great and delightful state for the mind to experience.

6. ABIDING IN QUIETUDE

When the great and delightful feeling of tranquility comes to us, we can say that the mind is more stable. We feel the mind, body, and breathing becoming even more stable. We enjoy this kind of feeling, not as an attachment of pleasure, but as a natural result of virtuous practice. We love this moment for in this moment there are no longer any distractions. Hence, this is called quietude abiding. From this time on the personality will change. **We grow to appreciate a deeper quiet mind as compared to how we have been in the past. We are no longer attracted to distractions, to noisiness, and to disturbances.** All the information from the senses and any thoughts of ill-will from the past no longer have any appeal for this contemplating imagination. At this stage we have a new feeling of no longer being attracted to that kind of the external stimulation.

7. SUPREME QUIETUDE

The seventh step is called “followed by supreme quietude.” This is an even more peaceful and calm state of mind. The mindfulness is strong enough to immediately dispel and eliminate the errors of the mind. When a person’s practice comes to this point, any experience of the inner impurities is gone. We know something is different in life right now. **The psychological mind-state becomes even more balanced. This type of level-headedness is so balanced that there is a total reduction of all anger, worry, anxiety, dullness, drowsiness, and sleepiness.** All of these past habits have ceased. We have found a mindfulness that is very strong and clear, a mind-state composed from a new energy wherein rising thoughts are immediately cut off without effort. This is the kind of energy that comes from supreme quietude, and as such, it is strongly related to single-pointed concentration.

The first four abiding minds are the stages of abiding calmly on the object of focus. But one practices cessation and achieves concentration primarily for the purpose of departing from unwholesomeness qualities, such as desire. Once the power of concentration has become stronger – in the fifth to seventh stages – one is at the point of subduing afflictions. Only when the mind is quiet and pure can one proceed toward right concentration.

8. SINGLE-POINTED CONCENTRATION

When single-pointedness is formed, the mind begins to deepen into a type of concentration where the mind is kept even and straightforward. When single-pointed concentration is achieved we have nearly completed the basic sequence of the nine abiding minds practice which will lead us to still deeper concentrated states called the four jhanas. **In single-pointed concentration there is almost no difference between the penetration into the mind and into the object of mind. We cannot separate where the self is and where the opposite object is.** Here and now we find an essential quality emerging that comes from this direct perception of a more subtle reality. This experience is called joyful diligence: a joining of right effort and tranquility. This connection between right effort and tranquility is not solely in the mind as it permeates the entire mind-body. It is actually through the body's focus that the mind is brought into this more refined form of concentration experienced as remaining single-pointed. When someone comes to this kind of mind-state, the material world no longer can evoke craving and clinging. All of the sensory stimuli that have previously acted as a fuel, promising to make the mind happy, are now corrected by the mind and the coarse and subtle desires cease arising.

9. MAINTAINING EQUANIMITY WITHOUT ACTION

Now we come to the last step: maintaining equanimity without action. Equanimity is realized when the mind takes no action. The mind-state operates naturally without scatteredness. This is a much more advanced stage of the mind in meditation. It is called the state of concentrated balanced mind. **The nine abiding minds apply the practice step-by-step in a process ultimately reaching the goal of equanimity.** This final stage is called 'nine is one,' and is the result of consistent and deep mindful practice. This is what is called the ninth abiding mind.

Hearing about the teachings, reading about the practices, studying and analyzing, these are all beneficial, but only to a point. If we don't apply and put the teaching into practice, we will not advance to true realization. Only when we apply ourselves to the practice of calm-abiding will we bear its fruit.

Born in Malaysia, MASTER JI RU was ordained as a Theravada monk in 1980. He later studied Chinese Buddhism and ordained in that tradition under the great Buddhist Master, Venerable Zhu Mo in 1986. Currently he is Abbot of the Mid-America Buddhist Association in Augusta, Missouri, and its sister temple in Chicago, the International Buddhism Friendship Association.

When someone comes to this kind of mind-state, the material world no longer can evoke craving and clinging.

Equanimity is realized when the mind takes no action.





DHAMMA WITHOUT REBIRTH?

Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi

In line with the present-day stress on the need for religious teachings to be personally relevant and directly verifiable, in many dhamma circles the time-honored Buddhist doctrine of rebirth has come up for stern re-examination. Although only a few contemporary Buddhist thinkers still go so far as to suggest that this doctrine be tossed aside as 'unscientific,' another opinion has gained currency which also detracts from the teaching on rebirth.

According to this other view, the doctrine of rebirth is a mere "metaphysical" hypothesis that has no essential connections with the heart of the Buddha's teaching. The dhamma, it is said, is essentially a pragmatic, existential therapy aimed at helping us to resolve our immediate problem of suffering in the here and now. The means it offers us to accomplish this task include a variety of practical techniques that help us gain inner calm and enhance awareness of the inner workings of our minds.

At the heart of these practical techniques is the practice of meditation. Meditation promotes self-awareness and inner understanding but has no need for rituals, articles of faith, and religious doctrines, which are nothing more than crutches for weak minds. The belief system of traditional Buddhism, it is said, is merely part of the cultural baggage of Asia that we inherit along with the essence of the dhamma. But with our present enlightened understanding, we can extract the precious treasure of the dhamma from its cultural and religious baggage, and we can then discard the baggage as inappropriate in this age of scientific knowledge and technological progress.

If we suspend our own assumptions and biases for the moment and instead go directly to our sources, we come upon the indisputable

fact that the Buddha himself repeatedly taught rebirth and apparently taught it as a basic principle of his teaching. Viewed in their totality, the Buddha's discourses show us that far from being a mere concession to the mode of thinking prevalent in his time, far from being a mere cultural accretion to the dhamma, the doctrine of rebirth is intimately related to so many other teachings that to think of removing it is to risk reducing the dhamma to a pale image of its original formulation. On reflection, we would further find that the teaching of rebirth is not merely an article of Buddhist faith, an empty dogma, but has tremendous implications for the entire course of dhamma practice.

According to the Pali Nikayas, the most ancient collection of Buddhist texts, the aim of the Buddhist path is liberation from suffering. Superficially, this might seem to mean that the dhamma is concerned solely with the present life, with helping us to free ourselves from misery, anxiety, and confusion in the here and now. But if we don't stop with this mere phrase, but look into the deeper meaning of the Buddha's discourses, we will see that the Buddha makes it abundantly clear that the suffering he is ultimately speaking about is the suffering of bondage to samsara, the round of repeated birth and death. This is the suffering he wants us to fully understand; this is the suffering from which the dhamma is intended to rescue us.

To be sure, the dhamma does have an aspect that is directly visible and can be personally verified here and now. By direct inspection of our own experience we can see that sorrow, anxiety, fear, and grief always arise from our mental defilements – from our greed, aversion, and ignorance. Conversely, we can also see that sorrow, anxiety, fear, and grief can be eliminated through the removal of our mental defilements. The importance of this directly visible side of dhamma practice shouldn't be underestimated, for it helps to inspire our confidence in the

To recognize the principle of rebirth will give us a panoramic standpoint from which we can survey our lives in their broader context and total network of relationships.

liberating power of the Buddhist path. However, **to downplay the doctrine of rebirth and interpret the entire purpose of the dhamma as release from psychological suffering is to dilute and distort the teaching.** By doing so one seriously risks reducing it in the end to little more than an ancient system of psychotherapy.

The Buddha himself has clearly indicated that the root problem of human life is not simply the fact that we are vulnerable to sorrow, grief, and fear here and now, but that we bind ourselves, by our craving and ignorance, to the repeated round of birth, aging, sickness, and death, within which we meet the various types of physical and mental affliction. Thus the deeper problem that underlies bodily and mental suffering is our bondage to birth and death. The Buddha has also shown that the primary danger in the defilements is their causal role in sustaining the round of rebirths. As long as they remain intact within the deep strata of the mind, they drag us through the round of becoming, leading us from death to new birth and from birth to new death. And as we go on from life to life, we shed a flood of tears “greater than the waters of the four oceans.” If we consider these points carefully, we would then see that the practice of dhamma is not designed merely to provide us with a simple therapy that will enable us to allay our worries and anxieties. It aims, rather, at bringing about a far-reaching inner transformation in the very depths of consciousness – a transformation that will liberate us from the cycle of worldly existence in its entirety.

Admittedly, for most of us our primary motivation for entering the Buddha’s path has been a troubling sense of dissatisfaction

with the routine course of our ordinary lives rather than a keen perception of the dangers in the round of rebirths. However, if we are to follow the dhamma through to its end and tap its full potential for conferring peace and higher wisdom, we have to guide our practice beyond the motives that originally spurred us to enter the path. We have to outgrow our original agendas and grow into the program the Buddha has outlined for us in his clear and well-defined teachings. And this means we should be ready to investigate those essential truths disclosed to us by the Buddha, which we can then use to deepen our practice and strengthen our motivation for pursuing the goal of the teaching.

One of these essential truths is the principle of rebirth, with its counterpart, the doctrine of kamma. Though contemplating the presently existent phenomena is the key to the practice of insight meditation, it would be a fundamental mistake to hold that the entire practice of dhamma consists in simply being mindful of the present moment. The Buddhist path stresses the role of wisdom as the means of liberation, and wisdom includes not only a penetration of the present moment in its vertical depths, but a comprehension of the past and future horizons within which our present existence unfolds. To recognize the principle of rebirth will give us a panoramic standpoint from which we can survey our lives in their broader context and total network of relationships. This will spur us on in our own pursuit of the path and will reveal the profound significance of the goal towards which our practice points, liberation from the cycle of rebirths as the ultimate end of suffering.

Bhikkhu Bodhi, born Jeffrey Block, is an American Buddhist monk, ordained in Sri Lanka and currently teaching in the New York/New Jersey area. He was appointed the second president of the Buddhist Publication Society and has edited and authored several publications grounded in the Theravada Buddhist tradition.



Lovingkindness and Compassion:

the fundamental practices of realization

In this reflective article, excerpted from *The Three Essentials of Buddhist Practice*, **Master Yin Shun** explains how the attainment of enlightenment cannot be reached through rational experience alone, but rather through a harmonious merging of wisdom, with lovingkindness and compassion for all.



Original translation by Tan Jia
Edited by Xianyang Carl Jerome

As followers of Mahayana Buddhism, it is important that we fully understand that lovingkindness and compassion are the essence of the Mahayana path. In bodhisattva practice, it is written: “The core of Buddhism is nothing but great compassion and lovingkindness.” Mahayana scriptures are both unanimous and emphatic in declaring that these two practices are the very heart of Buddhism. Without them there are neither Buddhas nor bodhisattvas. Without lovingkindness and compassion, there would be no Buddhadharma.

The development and maintenance of lovingkindness and compassion were fundamental aspirations of the Buddha himself. When we examine his biography we see evidence of this in nearly every aspect of his life and work.

The Buddha was motivated to seek the truth after watching the suffering of men and animals as they labored and lived under the blazing Indian sun: local farmers working in the fields, persevering despite hunger, thirst and exhaustion; exhausted buffaloes, injured by their yokes, being whipped into productivity, their blood dripping onto the earth. Farmers tilling the land and birds diving into the freshly turned soil to eat insects, maggots and the worms that fed on the blood tainted earth.

Shakyamuni was greatly anguished by what he saw. He realized that all beings suffered without exception, including himself. His great empathy led him to understand how others felt under this burden as well. It was his bodhisattva attitude that led him to take all sentient beings into consideration with great compassion as he weighed the problem of suffering and sought a way to alleviate it. When at last, under the bodhi tree, he attained enlightenment and understood the truth of life, he immediately began his travels along the banks of the Ganges River. His aim? To enlighten all suffering beings by turning the dharma wheel.

If we look in to the past lives of the Buddha as recorded in Jakata (stories of the Buddha’s previous lives), they too are filled with altruism, lovingkindness and compassion. Throughout those stories, bodhisattvas practiced the paramitas and upon achieving a state of perfection, they became Buddhas. Hence, the practice and goal of the Mahayana teaching – the practice of bodhisattvas and the attainment of Buddhahood – are a self-contained, self-perpetuating loop of conditioned causality. In other words, they are both a source for and a result of minds and actions comprised of and engaged in continuous lovingkindness and compassion, without which there would be no Mahayana teaching.

"FREE FROM THE BELIEF IN A CREATOR GOD,...THE BUDDHADHARMA IS ABLE TO PROBE DIRECTLY INTO THE ORIGIN OF LOVINGKINDNESS AND COMPASSION, COMPLETELY AND THOROUGHLY EMBODYING IT."

The Origin of Lovingkindness and Compassion

The foundation of the Buddhadharma is lovingkindness and compassion. In some ways, this is not unlike benevolence in Chinese culture or universal love in Christianity. Free from the belief in a creator god, though, the Buddhadharma is able to probe directly into the origin of lovingkindness and compassion, completely and thoroughly embodying it. According to the dharma, the manifestation of lovingkindness and compassion is a natural response of empathetic feelings resulting from the interaction of our various faculties.

From conditioned causation, we realize that all things on earth including all matter, mind and lives, are interdependent and not independent of each other. The manifestation of individual and independent activities existing in reality is the result of a combination of causes and conditions that are tied together just as knots are tied in a net. Activities that appear to be independent and individual are in actuality dependent. Without these very specific relational conditions they would not exist. The world and everything in it, all living things, all living beings, are formed in this way. Developing and understanding this correlation of conditional causation in all things leads us to form a compassionate view of life. This view embraces a selfless perspective, a perspective of mutual help, of accepting and returning kindness. In other words, this view of life is based on lovingkindness and compassion.

In terms of the present life, humans cannot survive without society. Besides relationships within families, we depend upon each other for everything – from clothes and food, housing and medications, agricultural and industrial products, everything is grown or manufactured and then transported via complex commercial system upon which we are dependent. Our acquisition of knowledge and skills, our success in study and career all depend on the support of teachers and friends. Governments provide us

with a social order, community structure, and security. Without the interaction of all these correlated causes and conditions, we would not have even a moment of peace and harmony.

Today, all the disparate parts of our world are more interdependent than ever. The ideologies and economies are all more closely linked than ever before. The well-being of all species, from the tiniest insect to the largest animal, are all connected and each exists in direct or indirect relationship to our destiny and happiness.

Since human beings and all other living things are so intimately related, it is natural for us to feel empathy for each other – empathy is based on a realization that we all share something in common. This intimate concern leads us to want to practice lovingkindness and compassion so that we may bring happiness to others and eradicate suffering for all.

From the perspective of the continuous flow of life in three periods, all sentient beings have been closely related to us from beginningless time. They have shared intimate lives with us as our parents, siblings, spouses and children. We owe gratitude to all sentient beings and so a bodhisattva considers all sentient beings as their parents and siblings. In the Buddha's mind, all sentient beings were just like Rahula, his own son. This realization of the connection between all sentient beings reaches beyond family, nationality and humankind. It is beyond any shared profession, social status, racial distinction, or religious affiliation. It comes from our expanded and continuous relationship between the self and other. Understanding this, we are natural inclined to be altruistic (offer lovingkindness) and helpful (compassionate) to all sentient beings as our way of showing gratitude to them. Lovingkindness and compassion are, in fact, the manifestation of the law of conditional causation in the form of empathy and concern.

From the impartial nature of conditional causation, we can see that all things are interrelated and infinitely divergent. None exists independently or solitarily. The ultimate meaning of the law of conditional causation lies in the nature of no-self, which leads us to understand the impartiality in all things that are inherent in the dharma. This universal impartiality does not belong to a god but is the universal nature of each instance of conditional causation. Understanding the law of conditional causation from this perspective, we then advance from complementary concern to non-discriminatory equality.

Mahayana Buddhism teaches not only that the Buddha and all sentient beings are equal, but also that all sentient beings have the potential to become a buddha. This idea arises quite organically and logically from the belief that all beings are equal. In this state of universal equality, it is natural to feel great compassion for all beings, as they all have the same nature as we do. As long as sentient beings suffer, are ignorant, and lost, as long as they have not attained enlightenment, we suffer. This is why the practice of lovingkindness and compassion continues to endless time. It is the path to saving all sentient beings, setting them free from suffering.

All sentient beings, humans in particular, should act altruistically not only because of the common realization of mutual dependence as indicated in conditional causation, but also because of an intuitive sense of shared happiness. Whether it is for ourselves or for others, we desire equality and peace for all. This

may not fathom it; but an intuitive awareness of this sense reappears through our distorted and delusive mind. This is the source of lovingkindness and compassion. The spirit of lovingkindness and compassion is therefore a natural manifestation of the human mind towards the truth of all things.

The Mind and Practice of Lovingkindness and Compassion.

Lovingkindness and compassion are the foundation of Buddhism and the essence of Bodhisattva practice. Every move and every action of the bodhisattva are the expression of and the motivation for lovingkindness and compassion. Because of this, the Bodhisattva is never free. He is not free to do what his heart desires, but only what all sentient beings need as he is driven by his lovingkindness and compassion from deep down. For the benefits of other sentient beings, his actions are altruistic and self-sacrificing.

The lovingkindness and compassion of a bodhisattva are embodied in the four heavenly abodes. They are lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. Lovingkindness is defined as offering benefits, peace and happiness to all sentient beings in this world and beyond. Compassion is to act to relieve the sufferings of all beings so that they may be exempted from rebirth and death. Sympathetic joy is the joy of sharing with those sentient beings who have been released from suffering and have found happiness. Equanimity is when we treat friends and foes alike without weighing their response to our own actions.

On the other hand, if we act towards others with a mind bent on generating gratitude or hatred towards us we will only develop either attachments or aversions. If we are attached to the effect our behavior generates we

will be inclined to like those who greet us with gratitude and dislike those who greet us with hostility or hatred. The bodhisattva path is to practice no-self, non-attachment, equanimity,

THE LOVINGKINDNESS AND COMPASSION OF A BODHISATTVA ARE EMBODIED IN THE FOUR HEAVENLY ABODES.

is not God's calling, but the disclosure of the nature of conditional causation. We may not realize it, but neither can we depart from it. Due to our ignorance, delusion and limitation, we

doing what is right without regard for the outcome or response from others.

The major objectives of practicing with lovingkindness and compassion are to bring happiness to others and eradicate misery. People who are jealous and unhappy when they see others happy and content, or who are vengeful, who bear strong feelings of love and hate—it is hard for them to practice impartiality, unselfish lovingkindness and compassion. The true bodhi mind is a combination of the four qualities: lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

The possession of these qualities alone is not enough; they must be solidified by practice. Without practice they are only mere thinking. By practicing the four all-embracing virtues we make our lovingkindness and compassion real and thus benefit other beings. The four embracing virtues are actions that serve as the bridge between the conceptual and practical application of practice in the world. They are: giving, offering things material and immaterial; words of love; beneficial acts for the public; and working with others.

Giving can be in the form of monetary assistance, labor or even the sacrifice of our lives. They are all considered material offerings. A dharma offering is to give Buddhist teachings through words that can lead peoples' minds towards goodness and away from evil. For people who are troubled, perplexed, down or in pain, a bodhisattva will use the correct teachings of the Buddha to guide them to the truth. He will use expedient methods that are pertinent to protect and help the person in need. This is called fearless offering. These three kinds of offerings sum up all acts of altruism. Without these offerings lovingkindness and compassion would have no significance.

Offerings need also to be accompanied by words of love, beneficial acts for the public and working with others in order to realize our acts of altruism. Words of love are any words of concern. These may be kind words spoken gently or urgent scolding words with good

intentions that are true expressions arising from our lovingkindness and compassion. Words offered in these ways can be felt and gladly accepted by the listener. If we were to make the mistake of offering our help with a contemptuous, conceited attitude, they will be rejected. Even if they are accepted it will be with reluctance and aversion. If we make comments on people or issues, they should arise from our lovingkindness and compassion and be delivered with good intentions and constructive suggestions. Otherwise, people's aversions will cause misunderstandings and conflicts even if our suggestions are valid.

Altruistic conduct is for the benefit of the public welfare. As we perform charitable deeds, we must always bear this in mind.

Working with others in a cooperative manner means that though we will surely experience ups and downs together, we do so with equanimity, not allowing our own attachments or aversions to arise and impact our actions. At work and at play, we want to blend in and treat everyone equally. Such attitudes win over people's hearts and create greater peace and tranquility for everyone.

Bodhisattvas who want to practice lovingkindness and compassion for the benefit of others must do this tactfully and in balance with wisdom. Words of love, altruistic conduct and working cooperatively with others are effective ways of making offerings to others. They are essential characteristics of the actions of virtuous leaders, serving to benefit and unify all sentient beings. As honorable leaders, bodhisattvas guide not for the authority of leadership but for the salvation of all sentient beings.

Bodhisattvas realize that only through the practice of lovingkindness and compassion can they unite and benefit all sentient beings. The combination of the bodhi mind paired with the practice of lovingkindness and compassion are required of all bodhisattvas. The leadership skills and actions of bodhisattvas are not confined to

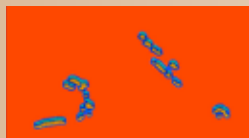
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the realm of politics, but are applicable in any social level or any profession. A bodhisattva who possesses the bodhi mind and who practices lovingkindness and compassion will always be an influential leader. An example of this was Vimalakirti who, as a lay Buddhist, became the central honored one among all other leaders for his possession of these qualities.

Nurturing Lovingkindness and Compassion

All of sentient beings possess lovingkindness and compassion but this inherent virtue cannot always be expanded because we can't dissociate ourselves from our selfishness and narrow-mindedness. When mixed with other complexities the sentiments become what we call love. In "Ode to a Tiger," the ancient poet wrote:



*Respected like no other,
No animal dares to enrage the tiger.
But when it comes to his cubs,
He walks and looks back at them with tender lovingkindness.*

TREAT FRIENDS AND FOES ALIKE.

Tenderness and lovingkindness are inherent in all sentient beings, even the ferocious tiger, who though dreadfully feared by all others is a doting parent. However, lovingkindness and compassion are offered selectively. In practice though, bodhisattvas need to focus their attention on the expansion and purification of these qualities, lest they be distorted by selfishness and narrow-mindedness. Our practice should be concentrated on nurturing the ability to offer these qualities equally to all, just as we would nurture all the roots of a plant to guarantee its optimal growth and health. According to ancient arahats, there are two ways to nurture and sustain the mind of lovingkindness and compassion: (1) put ourselves into other's shoes and (2) treat friends and foes alike.

Put ourselves into other people's shoes? Or, what should we do if we were in their position? How should we handle any particular matter? Everyone is inclined to love and care for themselves. Since this is so, imagine what would occur if we could extend our thoughts and feelings about ourselves out towards others with the clarity and purity of emotion. In this case, we would treat everyone as if they were ourselves, and quite naturally lovingkindness and compassion for all others would emerge and grow.

The Dhammapada reminds us that "All sentient beings are afraid to die. Everyone fears the knife and the rod." By recognizing that our own feelings are not unique but are in fact held in common with all sentient beings, we can see that by extending our feelings outward we can cut a path to understanding how others feel. In doing this we see that we must neither kill nor use the rod. While this can expand our self-love and nurture our lovingkindness and compassion, alone it cannot lead us to achieve complete purification of the mind.

Treat friends and foes alike. All sentient beings may be classified in terms of their relation to us as intimates, neutrals or enemies. Aside from ourselves, nobody is more dear and intimate to us than our parents, spouses and children, so it is easy to offer them lovingkindness and compassion. On the other hand, it is most difficult to find in our hearts lovingkindness and compassion for our enemies and foes. An expedient way to nurture and sustain our lovingkindness and compassion is to start with offering these to our closest loved ones, then to extend outwards to include strangers and finally to include our enemies. We start with our family and friends, observing their suffering so

that we may eradicate it. We note their unhappiness so that we may provide them with happiness. In each case, we practice with the aim of feeling their happiness and suffering as if they were our own. This will encourage us to constantly want to bring happiness and relieve pain for them.

The next step is to extend our practice to those about whom we feel neutral, feeling neither gratitude nor resentment. As we observe in greater detail, we will begin to realize that they are all our benefactors. From time immemorial, who can say that they were not our parents and teachers at one time or another? Thus, we can practice lovingkindness and compassion toward them as if they were our benefactors and beloved family members.

When we can practice this with those about whom we feel neutral, we go a step further and practice it with regard to our enemies. They were and perhaps still are our enemies, but were they not nice to us before? Why must we concentrate on holding a grudge and not offering forgiveness? Besides, it is not in their character to incur hatred on us; but rather caused by prejudice, material attraction or their own vexation. As they are vicious and ignorant, we should take pity on them, forgive them and help them. Let us not hold grudges against them over some minor mistakes on their part.

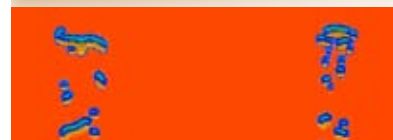
Moreover, things can change between us and our loved ones and our enemies. If we do not treat our loved ones with the righteous teachings of the Buddha and kind-heartedness, we can become enemies. By the same token, if we treat our hostile enemies with the righteous teachings of the Buddha and kind-heartedness, we can turn them into our friends. Then,

why don't we practice lovingkindness and compassion toward our enemies by bringing them happiness and relieving them of their suffering? If we can expand our practice to even include our enemies, we have achieved the goal of treating friends and foes alike. Our kind-heartedness embraces everything. This is the kind of lovingkindness and compassion as taught in the Buddhadharmā. We should nurture it by sustaining and expanding it constantly. These are the expedient ways to practice lovingkindness and compassion.

The Experience of Lovingkindness and Compassion

According to Mahayana Buddhism, lovingkindness and compassion and wisdom are not mutually exclusive. Even in the deluded stream of consciousness of humans, sense and sensibility are by no means isolated from each other. Instead, they complement each other to become different facets within the same stream of consciousness. In the process of purification, witnessing wisdom is analogous to implementing lovingkindness and compassion. Wisdom is not dry and cold reasoning, but a sincere embodiment of lovingkindness and compassion. The Buddha's perfect enlightenment is the ultimate attainment of supreme wisdom as well as the supreme realization of lovingkindness and compassion. If we practice Buddha's teachings without lovingkindness and compassion, we will fall prey to heresy. We will become practitioners of extreme arrogance.

**THE BUDDHA'S
PERFECT
ENLIGHTENMENT
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OF SUPREME
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LOVINGKINDNESS
AND COMPASSION.**



Venerable Yin Shun
(1904-2005) is considered one of the greatest Chinese Buddhist intellectuals of the 20th century. Though he wrote more than fifty books, only one, *The Way to Buddhahood*, is available in English. It is thought to be a masterpiece of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism.

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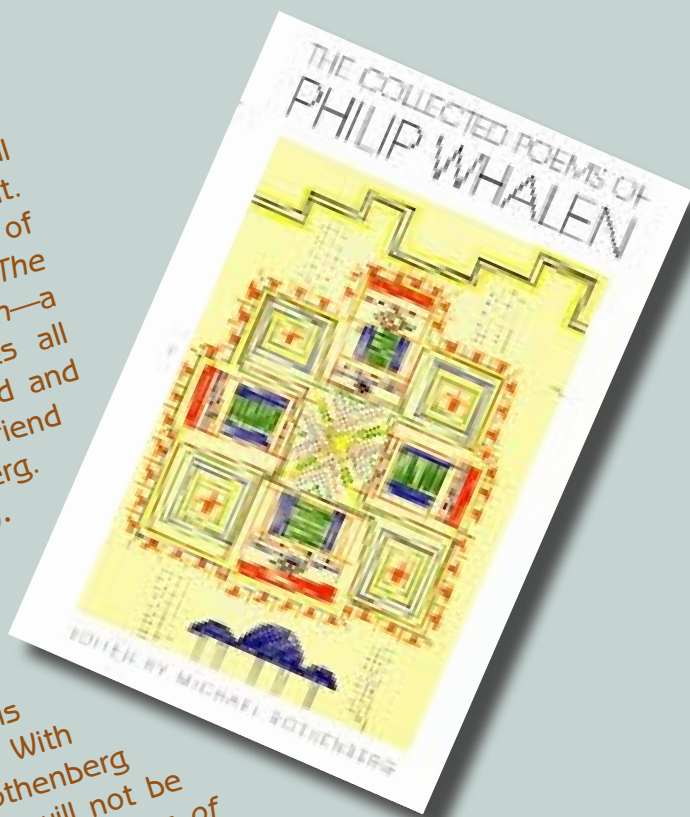
FROM

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF PHILIP WHALEN



PHILIP WHALEN has been described as the poet laureate of the Beat generation. His poetry is inspiring, original, candid, and often witty. It is filled with perceptual moments of profound insight. Here we have selected a few of his 'Buddhist' poems from The Collected Poems of Philip Whalen—a 900-page tome that includes all of Whalen's poems, collected and assembled by his longtime friend and editor, Michael Rothenberg. (Visit www.bigbridge.org).

Whalen worried, in the last years of his life, that no one would have access to his poetry after he died. With this new volume Rothenberg has ensured that this will not be the case. The Collected Poems of Philip Whalen (published in 2007 by Wesleyan University Press) is available in print as well as online as a Google Book.



A Vision of the Bodhisattvas

They pass before me one by one riding on animals
“What are you waiting for,” they want to know

Z-, young as he is (& mad into the bargain) tells me
“Some day you’ll drop everything & become
a rishi, you know.”

I know
The forest is there, I’ve lived in it
more certainly than this town? Irrelevant—

What am I waiting for?
A change in customs that will take 1000 years to come about?
Who’s to make the change but me?

“Returning again and again,” Amida says

Why’s that dream so necessary? walking out of whatever house alone
Nothing but the clothes on my back, money or no
Down the road to the next place the highway leading to the
mountains

From which I absolutely must come back

What business have I to do that?
I know the world and I love it too much and it
Is not the one I’d find outside this door.

31:iii:60

Grace Before Meat

You food, you animal plants
I take you, now, I make you wise
Beautiful and great with joy
Enlightenment for all sentient beings
All the hungry spirits, gods and Buddhas who are sad

30:v:67

Japanese Tea Garden Golden Gate Park in Spring

1. I come to look at the cherryblossoms
for the last time
2. Look up through flower branching Deva world
(happy ignorance)
3. These blossoms will be gone in a week
I'll be gone long before.

This is to say, the cherry trees will blossoms every year but I'll disappear for good, one of these days. There. That's all about the absolute permanence of the most impossibly fragile delicate and fleeting objects. By objects, I mean this man who is writing this, the stars, baked ham, as well as the cherryblossoms. This doesn't explain anything.

2:iv:65

Mahayana

Soap cleans itself the way ice does,
Both disappear in the process.
The questions of "Whence" & "Wither" have no validity here.

Mud is a mixture of earth and water
Imagine **WATER** as an "Heavenly: element
Samsara and nirvana are one:

Flies in amber, sand in the soap
Dirt and red algae in the ice
Fare thee well, how very delightful to see you here again!

5:iv:65

Kitchen Practice

They got it all fixed up the way
They wanted and now
They've changed it back again
They've eaten all the sugar
They've taken all the teapots to
their rooms.

23:vii:73



The Lotus Sutra, Naturalized

I got drunk your house
You put that diamond my shirt pocket
How am I supposed to know?
Laying there in drunk tank
 strange town don't nobody know
Get out of jail at last you say
"You already spend that diamond?"
How am I going to know?

27:iii:64



The Ghosts

Of people dead fifty year and not only people—
Theatres and streetcars and large hotels follow me
Into this dusty little gully. None of them ever liked California
Why don't they stay in Portland where they belong.
I'm tired of them.

A new ghost in this morning's dream,
Beautiful and young and still alive
How far will that one follow me? I'm not chasing any,
Any more.

14:Vii:79

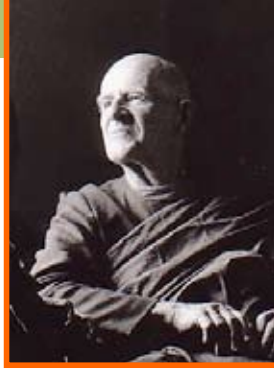


Haiku, for Gary Snyder

IS
Here's a dragonfly (T O T A L L Y)
Where it was,
 that place no longer exists.

15:i:60

THE BIG FOUR



by Nyanaponika Thera



Contemplations on Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity (a.k.a. The Four Sublime States, The Four Immeasurables, and The Four Heavenly Abodes)

The Buddha often spoke about four states of mind as the four Brahmaviharas: the divine or god-like dwellings, the lofty and excellent abodes in which the mind reaches outwards towards the immeasurable world of living beings, embracing them all in these boundless emotions. These four sublime states are loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. They are considered to be the ideal social attitudes, the springs underlying the ideal modes of conduct towards living beings. The great healers of social tension and conflict, the builders of harmony and cooperation, they serve as potent antidotes to the poisons of hatred, cruelty, envy and partiality so widespread in modern life.

Here, **Venerable Nyanaponika Thera**, one of the great interpreters of Buddhist teachings in our time, offers a series of contemplations on these four lofty states, exploring them individually and in their subtle and complex interrelationships.

FOUR SUBLIME STATES OF MIND WERE TAUGHT BY THE BUDDHA:

Love or Lovingkindness (metta)

Compassion (karuna)

Sympathetic Joy (mudita)

Equanimity (upekkha)

In Pali, the language of the Buddhist scriptures, these four are known under the name of Brahmavihara. This term may be rendered by excellent, lofty or sublime states of mind; or alternatively, by Brahma-like, God-like or divine abodes.

They provide, in fact, the answer to all situations arising from social contact.

As the *Metta Sutta, the Song of Loving-kindness*, says:



*When standing, walking, sitting, lying down,
Whenever he feels free of tiredness
Let him establish well this mindfulness—
This, it is said, is the divine abode.*

These four attitudes are said to be excellent or sublime because they are the right or ideal way of conduct towards living beings. They provide, in fact, the answer to all situations arising from social contact. They are the great removers of tension, the great peacemakers in social conflict, and the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence. They level social barriers, build harmonious communities, awaken slumbering magnanimity long forgotten, revive joy and hope long abandoned, and promote human brotherhood against the forces of egotism.

These four—love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity—are also known as the boundless states, because, in their perfection and their true nature, they should not be narrowed by any limitation as to the range of beings towards whom they are extended. They should be non-exclusive and impartial, not bound by selective preferences or prejudices. A mind that has attained to that boundlessness of the *Brahmaviharas* will not harbor any national, racial, religious or class hatred.

The *Brahmaviharas* are incompatible with a hating state of mind, and in that they are akin to Brahma, the divine but transient ruler of the higher heavens in the traditional Buddhist picture of the universe. In contrast to many other conceptions of deities, East and West, who by their own devotees are said to show anger, wrath, jealousy and righteous indignation, Brahma is free from hate; and one who assiduously develops these four sublime states, by conduct and meditation, is said to become an equal of Brahma. If they become the dominant influence in his mind, he will be reborn in congenial worlds, the realms of Brahma.

Therefore, these states of mind are called God-like, Brahma-like. They are called abodes (*vihara*) because they should become the mind's constant dwelling places where we feel at home; they should not remain merely places of rare and short visits, soon forgotten. In other words, our minds should become thoroughly saturated by them. They should become our inseparable companions, and we should be mindful of them in all our common activities.

But unless rooted in a strong natural affinity with such a mental attitude, it will certainly not be easy for us to effect that boundless application by a deliberate effort of will and to avoid consistently any kind or degree of partiality. To achieve that, in most cases, we shall have to use these four qualities not only as principles of conduct and objects of reflection, but also as subjects of methodical meditation. That meditation is called *Brahmavihara-bhavana*, the meditative development of the sublime states. The practical aim is to achieve, with the help of these sublime states, those high stages of mental concentration called *jhana*, (meditative absorption.) The meditations on love, compassion and sympathetic joy may each produce the attainment of the first three absorptions, while the meditation on equanimity will lead to the fourth *jhana* only, in which equanimity is the most significant factor.

Generally speaking, persistent meditative practice will have two crowning effects: first, it will make these four qualities sink deep into the heart so that they become spontaneous attitudes not easily overthrown; second, it will bring out and secure their boundless extension, the unfolding of their all-embracing range. In fact, the detailed instructions given in the Buddhist scriptures for



the practice of these four meditations are clearly intended to unfold gradually the boundlessness of the sublime states. They systematically break down all barriers restricting their application to particular individuals or places.

In the meditative exercises, the selection of people to whom the thought of love, compassion or sympathetic joy is directed, proceeds from the easier to the more difficult. For instance, when meditating on lovingkindness, one starts with an aspiration for one's own wellbeing, using it as a point of reference for gradual extension:

*Just as I wish to be happy and free from suffering,
so may that being, may all beings be happy and free
from suffering!*

Then one extends the thought of lovingkindness to a person for whom one has a loving respect, as, for instance, a teacher; then to dearly beloved people, to indifferent ones, and finally to enemies, if any, or those disliked. Since this meditation is concerned with the welfare of the living, one should not choose people who have died; one should also avoid choosing people towards whom one may have feelings of sexual attraction.

After one has been able to cope with the hardest task, to direct one's thoughts of loving-kindness to disagreeable people, one should now break down the barriers (*sima-sambheda*). Without making any discrimination between those four types of people, one should extend one's loving-kindness to them equally. At that point of the practice one will have come to the higher stages of concentration: with the appearance of the mental reflex-image (*patibhaganimitta*), access concentration (*upacara samadhi*) will have been reached, and further progress will lead to the full concentration (*appana*) of the first jhana, then the higher jhanas.

For spatial expansion, the practice starts with those in one's immediate environment such as one's family, then extends to the neighboring

houses, to the whole street, the town, country, other countries and the entire world.

In pervasion of the directions, one's thought of lovingkindness is directed first to the east, then to the west, north, south, the intermediate directions, the zenith and nadir.

The same principles of practice apply to the meditative development of compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, with due variations in the selection of people. Details of the practice will be found in the texts (see *Visuddhimagga*, Chapter IX).

The ultimate aim of attaining these Brahma-vihara-jhanas is to produce a state of mind that can serve as a firm basis for the liberating insight into the true nature of all phenomena, as being impermanent, liable to suffering and unsubstantial. A mind that has achieved meditative absorption induced by the sublime states will be pure, tranquil, firm, collected and free of coarse selfishness. It will thus be well prepared for the final work of deliverance which can be completed only by insight.

The preceding remarks show that there are two ways of developing the sublime states: first by practical conduct and an appropriate direction of thought; and second by methodical meditation aiming at the absorptions. Each will prove helpful to the other. Methodical meditative practice will help love, compassion, joy and equanimity to become spontaneous. It will help make the mind firmer and calmer in withstanding the numerous irritations in life that challenge us to maintain these four qualities in thoughts, words and deeds.

On the other hand, if one's practical conduct is increasingly governed by these sublime states, the mind will harbor less resentment, tension and irritability, the reverberations of which often subtly intrude into the hours of meditation, forming there the hindrance of restlessness. Our everyday life and thought has a strong influence on the meditative mind; only if the gap between them is persistently narrowed will there be a chance for steady meditative progress and for achieving the highest aim of our practice.



Meditative development of the sublime states will be aided by repeated reflection upon their qualities, the benefits they bestow and the dangers from their opposites. As the Buddha says, "What a person considers and reflects upon for a long time, to that his mind will bend and incline."

The Basic Passage on the Four Sublime States from the Discourses of the Buddha

Here, monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with loving-kindness; likewise the second, the third, and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with lovingkindness, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity and free from distress.

Here, monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with compassion, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with compassion, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity and free from distress.

Here, monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with sympathetic joy, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with sympathetic joy, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity and free from distress.

Here, monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with equanimity, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with equanimity, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity and free from distress.

—*Digha Nikaya 13*

CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE FOUR SUBLIME STATES

LOVE (METTA)

Love, without desire to possess, knowing well that in the ultimate sense there is no possession and no possessor: this is the highest love.

Love, without speaking and thinking of 'I', knowing well that this so-called 'I' is a mere delusion.

Love, without selecting and excluding, knowing well that to do so means to create love's own contrasts: dislike, aversion and hatred.

Love, embracing all beings: small and great, far and near, be it on earth, in the water or in the air.

Love, embracing impartially all sentient beings, and not only those who are useful, pleasing or amusing to us.

Love, embracing all beings, be they noble-minded or low-minded, good or evil. The noble and the good are embraced because love is flowing to them spontaneously. The low-minded and evil-minded are included because they are those who are most in need of love. In many of them the seed of goodness may have died merely because warmth was lacking for its growth, because it perished from cold in a loveless world.

Love, embracing all beings, knowing well that we all are fellow wayfarers through this round of existence – that we all are overcome by the same law of suffering.

Love, but not the sensuous fire that burns, scorches and tortures, that inflicts more wounds than it cures – flaring up now, at the next moment being extinguished, leaving behind more coldness and loneliness than was felt before.

Rather, love that lies like a soft but firm hand on the ailing beings, ever unchanged in its sympathy, without wavering, unconcerned with any response it meets. Love that is comforting coolness to those who burn with the fire of suffering and passion; that is life-giving warmth to those abandoned in the cold desert of loneliness, to those who are

shivering in the frost of a loveless world; to those whose hearts have become as if empty and dry by the repeated calls for help, by deepest despair.

Love, that is a sublime nobility of heart and intellect which knows, understands and is ready to help.

Love, that is strength and gives strength: this is the highest Love.

Love, which by the Enlightened One was named “the liberation of the heart,” “the most sublime beauty”: this is the highest love.

And what is the highest manifestation of love?

To show to the world the path leading to the end of suffering, the path pointed out, trodden, and realized to perfection by Him, the Exalted One, the Buddha.

COMPASSION (KARUNA)

The world suffers. But most men have their eyes and ears closed. They do not see the unbroken stream of tears flowing through life; they do not hear the cry of distress continually pervading the world. Their own little grief or joy bars their sight, deafens their ears. Bound by selfishness, their hearts turn stiff and narrow. Being stiff and narrow, how should they be able to strive for any higher goal, to realize that only release from selfish craving will effect their own freedom from suffering?

It is compassion that removes the heavy bar, opens the door to freedom, makes the narrow heart as wide as the world. Compassion takes away from the heart the inert weight, the paralyzing heaviness; it gives wings to those who cling to the lowlands of self.

Through compassion the fact of suffering remains vividly present to our mind, even at times when we personally are free from it. It gives us the rich experience of suffering, thus strengthening us to meet it prepared, when it does befall us.



Compassion reconciles us to our own destiny by showing us the life of others, often much harder than ours.

Behold the endless caravan of beings, men and beasts, burdened with sorrow and pain! The burden of every one of them, we also have carried in bygone times during the unfathomable sequence of repeated births. Behold this, and open your heart to compassion!

And this misery may well be our own destiny again! He who is without compassion now, will one day cry for it. If sympathy with others is lacking, it will have to be acquired through one's own long and painful experience. This is the great law of life. Knowing this, keep guard over yourself!

Beings, sunk in ignorance, lost in delusion, hasten from one state of suffering to another, not knowing the real cause, not knowing the escape from it. This insight into the general law of suffering is the real foundation of our compassion, not any isolated fact of suffering.

Hence our compassion will also include those who at the moment may be happy, but act with an evil and deluded mind. In their present deeds we shall foresee their future state of distress, and compassion will arise.

The compassion of the wise man does not render him a victim of suffering. His thoughts, words and deeds are full of pity. But his heart does not waver; unchanged it remains, serene and calm. How else should he be able to help?

May such compassion arise in our hearts! Compassion that is sublime nobility of heart and intellect which knows, understands and is ready to help.

Compassion that is strength and gives strength: this is highest compassion.

And what is the highest manifestation of compassion?

To show to the world the path leading to the end of suffering, the path pointed out, trodden and realized to perfection by Him, the Exalted One, the Buddha.

SYMPATHETIC JOY (MUDITA)

Not only to compassion, but also to joy with others open your heart!

Small, indeed, is the share of happiness and joy allotted to beings! Whenever a little happiness comes to them, then you may rejoice that at least one ray of joy has pierced through the darkness of their lives, and dispelled the gray and gloomy mist that enwraps their hearts.

Your life will gain in joy by sharing the happiness of others as if it were yours. Did you never observe how in moments of happiness men's features change and become bright with joy? Did you never notice how joy rouses men to noble aspirations and deeds, exceeding their normal capacity? Did not such experience fill your own heart with joyful bliss? It is in your power to increase such experience of sympathetic joy, by producing happiness in others, by bringing them joy and solace.

Let us teach real joy to men! Many have unlearned it. Life, though full of woe, holds also sources of happiness and joy, unknown to most. Let us teach people to seek and to find real joy within themselves and to rejoice with the joy of others! Let us teach them to unfold their joy to ever sublimer heights!

Noble and sublime joy is not foreign to the Teaching of the Enlightened One. Wrongly the Buddha's Teaching is sometimes considered to be a doctrine diffusing melancholy. Far from it: the Dhamma leads step by step to an ever purer and loftier happiness.

Noble and sublime joy is a helper on the path to the extinction of suffering. Not he who is

depressed by grief, but one possessed of joy finds that serene calmness leading to a contemplative state of mind. And only a mind serene and collected is able to gain the liberating wisdom.

The more sublime and noble the joy of others is, the more justified will be our own sympathetic joy. A cause for our joy with others is their noble life securing them happiness here and in lives hereafter. A still nobler cause for our joy with others is their faith in the Dhamma, their understanding of the Dhamma, their following the Dhamma. Let us give them the help of the Dhamma! Let us strive to become more and more able ourselves to render such help!



ympathetic joy means a sublime nobility of heart and intellect which knows, understands and is ready to help.

Sympathetic joy that is strength and gives strength: this is the highest joy.

And what is the highest manifestation of sympathetic joy?

To show to the world the path leading to the end of suffering, the path pointed out, trodden, and realized to perfection by Him, the Exalted One, the Buddha.

EQUANIMITY (UPEKKHA)

Equanimity is a perfect, unshakable balance of mind, rooted in insight.

Looking at the world around us, and looking into our own heart, we see clearly how difficult it is to attain and maintain balance of mind.





Looking into life we notice how it continually moves between contrasts: rise and fall, success and failure, loss and gain, honor and blame. We feel how our heart responds to all this with happiness and sorrow, delight and despair, disappointment and satisfaction, hope and fear. These waves of emotion carry us up and fling us down; and no sooner do we find rest, than we are in the power of a new wave again. How can we expect to get a footing on the crest of the waves? How can we erect the building of our lives in the midst of this ever restless ocean of existence, if not on the Island of Equanimity.

A world where that little share of happiness allotted to beings is mostly secured after many disappointments, failures and defeats;

a world where only the courage to start anew, again and again, promises success;

a world where scanty joy grows amidst sickness, separation and death;

a world where beings who were a short while ago connected with us by sympathetic joy, are at the next moment in want of our compassion - such a world needs equanimity.

But the kind of equanimity required has to be based on vigilant presence of mind, not on indifferent dullness. It has to be the result of hard, deliberate training, not the casual outcome of a passing mood. But equanimity would not deserve its name if it had to be produced by exertion again and again. In such a case it would surely be weakened and finally defeated by the vicissitudes of life. True equanimity, however, should be able to meet all these severe tests and to regenerate its strength from sources within. It will possess this power of resistance and self-renewal only if it is rooted in insight.

What, now, is the nature of that insight? It is the clear understanding of how all these vicissitudes

of life originate, and of our own true nature. We have to understand that the various experiences we undergo result from our kamma - our actions in thought, word and deed - performed in this life and in earlier lives. Kamma is the womb from which we spring (kamma-yoni), and whether we like it or not, we are the inalienable "owners" of our deeds (kamma-ssaka). But as soon as we have performed any action, our control over it is lost: it forever remains with us and inevitably returns to us as our due heritage (kamma-dayada). Nothing that happens to us comes from an outer hostile world foreign to ourselves; everything is the outcome of our own mind and deeds. Because this knowledge frees us from fear, it is the first basis of equanimity. When, in everything that befalls us we only meet ourselves, why should we fear?

If, however, fear or uncertainty should arise, we know the refuge where it can be allayed: our good deeds (kamma-patisarana). By taking this refuge, confidence and courage will grow within us—confidence in the protecting power of our good deeds done in the past; courage to perform more good deeds right now, despite the discouraging hardships of our present life. For we know that noble and selfless deeds provide the best defense against the hard blows of destiny, that it is never too late but always the right time for good actions. If that refuge, in doing good and avoiding evil, becomes firmly established within us, one day we shall feel assured: "More and more ceases the misery and evil rooted in the past. And this present life - I try to make it spotless and pure. What else can the future bring than increase of the good?" And from that certainty our minds will become serene, and we shall gain the strength of patience and equanimity to bear with all our present adversities. Then our deeds will be our friends (kamma-bandhu).

Likewise, all the various events of our lives, being the result of our deeds, will also be our friends, even if they bring us sorrow and pain. Our deeds return to us in a guise that often makes them unrecognizable. Sometimes our actions return

to us in the way that others treat us, sometimes as a thorough upheaval in our lives; often the results are against our expectations or contrary to our wills. Such experiences point out to us consequences of our deeds we did not foresee; they render visible half-conscious motives of our former actions which we tried to hide even from ourselves, covering them up with various pretexts. If we learn to see things from this angle, and to read the message conveyed by our own experience, then suffering, too, will be our friend. It will be a stern friend, but a truthful and well-meaning one who teaches us the most difficult subject, knowledge about ourselves, and warns us against abysses towards which we are moving blindly. By looking at suffering as our teacher and friend, we shall better succeed in enduring it with equanimity. Consequently, the teaching of kamma will give us a powerful impulse for freeing ourselves from kamma, from those deeds which again and again throw us into the suffering of repeated births. Disgust will arise at our own craving, at our own delusion, at our own propensity to create situations which try our strength, our resistance and our equanimity.

The second insight on which equanimity should be based is the Buddha's teaching of no-self (anatta). This doctrine shows that in the ultimate sense deeds are not performed by any self, nor do their results affect any self. Further, it shows that if there is no self, we cannot speak of "my own." It is the delusion of a self that creates suffering and hinders or disturbs equanimity. If this or that quality of ours is blamed, one thinks: "I am blamed" and equanimity is shaken. If this or that work does not succeed, one thinks: "My work has failed" and equanimity is shaken. If wealth or loved ones are lost, one thinks: "What is mine has gone" and equanimity is shaken.

To establish equanimity as an unshakable state of mind, one has to give up all possessive thoughts of "mine", beginning with little things from which it is easy to detach oneself, and gradually working up to possessions and aims to which

one's whole heart clings. One also has to give up the counterpart to such thoughts, all egoistic thoughts of "self", beginning with a small section of one's personality, with qualities of minor importance, with small weaknesses one clearly sees, and gradually working up to those emotions and aversions which one regards as the center of one's being. Thus detachment should be practiced.

To the degree we forsake thoughts of "mine" or "self" equanimity will enter our hearts. For how can anything we realize to be foreign and void of a self cause us agitation due to lust, hatred or grief? Thus the teaching of no-self will be our guide on the path to deliverance, to perfect equanimity.

Equanimity is the crown and culmination of the four sublime states. But this should not be understood to mean that equanimity is the negation of love, compassion and sympathetic joy, or that it leaves them behind as inferior. Far from that, equanimity includes and pervades them fully, just as they fully pervade perfect equanimity.

The Inter-relations of the Four Sublime States

*How, then, do these four sublime states
pervade and suffuse each other?*



Unbounded love guards compassion against turning into partiality, prevents it from making discriminations by selecting and excluding and thus protects it from falling into partiality or aversion against the excluded side.

Love imparts to equanimity its selflessness, its boundless nature and even its fervor. For fervor, too, transformed and controlled, is part of perfect equanimity, strengthening its power of keen penetration and wise restraint.

Compassion prevents love and sympathetic joy from forgetting that, while both are enjoying or giving temporary and limited happiness, there still

exist at that time most dreadful states of suffering in the world. It reminds them that their happiness coexists with measureless misery, perhaps at the next doorstep. It is a reminder to love and sympathetic joy that there is more suffering in the world than they are able to mitigate; that, after the effect of such mitigation has vanished, sorrow and pain are sure to arise anew until suffering is uprooted entirely at the attainment of Nibbana. Compassion does not allow that love and sympathetic joy shut themselves up against the wide world by confining themselves to a narrow sector of it. Compassion prevents love and sympathetic joy from turning into states of self-satisfied complacency within a jealously guarded petty happiness. Compassion stirs and urges love to widen its sphere; it stirs and urges sympathetic joy to search for fresh nourishment. Thus it helps both of them to grow into truly boundless states (appamanna).

Compassion guards equanimity from falling into a cold indifference, and keeps it from indolent or selfish isolation. Until equanimity has reached perfection, compassion urges it to enter again and again the battle of the world, in order to be able to stand the test, by hardening and strengthening itself.

Sympathetic joy holds compassion back from becoming overwhelmed by the sight of the world's suffering, from being absorbed by it to the exclusion of everything else. Sympathetic joy relieves the tension of mind, soothes the painful burning of the compassionate heart. It keeps compassion away from melancholic brooding without purpose, from a futile sentimentality that merely weakens and consumes the strength of mind and heart. Sympathetic joy develops compassion into active sympathy.

Sympathetic joy gives to equanimity the mild serenity that softens its stern appearance. It is the divine smile on the face of the Enlightened One, a smile that persists in spite of his deep knowledge of the world's suffering, a smile that gives solace and hope, fearlessness and confidence: "Wide open are the doors to deliverance," thus it speaks.



Equanimity rooted in insight is the guiding and restraining power for the other three sublime states. It points out to them the direction they have to take, and sees to it that this direction is followed. Equanimity guards love and compassion from being dissipated in vain quests and from going astray in the labyrinths of uncontrolled emotion. Equanimity, being a vigilant self-control for the sake of the final goal, does not allow sympathetic joy to rest content with humble results, forgetting the real aims we have to strive for.

Equanimity, which means even-mindedness, gives to love an even, unchanging firmness and loyalty. It endows it with the great virtue of patience. Equanimity furnishes compassion with an even, unwavering courage and fearlessness, enabling it to face the awesome abyss of misery and despair which confront boundless compassion again and again. To the active side of compassion, equanimity is the calm and firm hand led by wisdom – indispensable to those who want to practice the difficult art of helping others. And here again equanimity means patience, the patient devotion to the work of compassion.

In these and other ways equanimity may be said to be the crown and culmination of the other three sublime states. The first three, if unconnected with equanimity and insight, may dwindle away due to the lack of a stabilizing factor. Isolated virtues, if unsupported by other qualities which give them either the needed firmness or pliancy, often deteriorate into their own characteristic defects. For instance, lovingkindness, without energy and insight, may easily decline to a mere sentimental goodness of weak and unreliable nature. Moreover, such isolated virtues may often carry us in a direction contrary to our original aims and contrary to the welfare of others, too. It is the firm and balanced character of a person that knits isolated virtues into an organic and harmonious whole, within which the single qualities exhibit their best manifestations and avoid the pitfalls of their respective weaknesses. And this is the very function of equanimity, the way it contributes to an ideal relationship between all four sublime states.

Equanimity is a perfect, unshakable balance of mind, rooted in insight. But in its perfection and unshakable nature equanimity is not dull, heartless and frigid. Its perfection is not due to an emotional “emptiness,” but to a “fullness” of understanding, to its being complete in itself. Its unshakable nature is not the immovability of a dead, cold stone, but the manifestation of the highest strength.

In what way, now, is equanimity perfect and unshakable?

Whatever causes stagnation is here destroyed, what dams up is removed, what obstructs is destroyed. Vanished are the whirls of emotion and the meanderings of intellect. Unhindered goes the calm and majestic stream of consciousness, pure and radiant. Watchful mindfulness (*sati*) has harmonized the warmth of faith (*saddha*) with the penetrative keenness of wisdom (*panna*); it has balanced strength of will (*viriya*) with calmness of mind (*samadhi*); and these five inner faculties (*indriya*) have grown into inner forces (*bala*) that cannot be lost again. They cannot be lost because they do not lose themselves any more in the labyrinths of the world (*samsara*), in the endless diffuseness of life (*papanca*). These inner forces emanate from the mind and act upon the world, but being guarded by mindfulness, they nowhere bind themselves, and they return unchanged. Love, compassion and sympathetic joy continue to emanate from the mind and act upon the world, but being guarded by equanimity, they cling nowhere, and return unweakened and unsullied.

Thus within the Arahant, the Liberated One, nothing is lessened by giving, and he does not become poorer by bestowing upon others the riches of his heart and mind. The Arahant is like the clear, well-cut crystal which, being without stains, fully absorbs all the rays of light and sends them out again, intensified by its concentrative power. The rays cannot stain the crystal with their various colors. They cannot pierce its hardness, nor disturb its harmonious structure. In its genuine purity and strength, the crystal remains unchanged. “Just as all the streams of the world enter the great ocean, and all the waters of the sky rain into it, but no increase or decrease of the great ocean is to be seen” - even so is the nature of holy equanimity. Holy equanimity, or – as we may likewise express it – the Arahant endowed with holy equanimity, is the inner center of the world. But this inner center should be well distinguished from the numberless apparent centers of limited spheres; that is, their so-called “personalities,” governing laws, and so on. All of these are only apparent centers, because they cease to be centers whenever their spheres, obeying the laws of impermanence, undergo a total change of their structure; and consequently the center of their gravity, material or mental, will shift. But the inner center of the Arahant’s equanimity is unshakable, because it is immutable. It is immutable because it clings to nothing.

Says the Master:

For one who clings, motion exists; but for one who clings not, there is no motion. Where no motion is, there is stillness. Where stillness is, there is no craving. Where no craving is, there is neither coming nor going. Where no coming nor going is, there is neither arising nor passing away. Where neither arising nor passing away is, there is neither this world nor a world beyond, nor a state between. This, verily, is the end of suffering.



Nyanaponika Thera or Nyaniponika Mahathera, 1901-1994, was a German-born Sri Lanka-ordained Theravada monk, co-founder of the Buddhist Publication Society, contemporary author of numerous seminal Theravada books, and teacher of contemporary Western Buddhist leaders.



An Introduction to Madhyamika Buddhism

PART 2

LANGUAGE AND INSIGHT

NÂGÂRJUNA BEGINS HIS TREATISE *FUNDAMENTALS OF THE MIDDLE WAY* WITH THE FOLLOWING STANZAS:

Never are any existing things found to originate from themselves, from something else, from both, or from no cause.

There are four conditioning causes: a cause, objective support of sensation, immediately preceding condition, and, of course, the predominant influence – there is no fifth.

Certainly there is no self-existence of existing things in these conditioning causes; and if no self-existence exists, neither does other-existence. The efficient cause does not exist possessing a conditioning cause. Nor does the efficient cause exist without possessing a conditioning cause. Conditioning causes are not without efficient causes. Nor are there conditioning causes which possess efficient causes.

Certainly those things are called conditioning causes whereby something originates after having come upon them. As long as something has not originated, why are they not so long non-conditioning-causes?

There can be a conditioning cause neither of a non-real thing nor of a real thing. Of what non-real thing is there a conditioning cause? And if it is already real, what use is a cause?

If a basic phenomenon (dharma) occurs which is neither real nor non-real nor both real-and-non-real, how can there be a cause which is effective in this situation?

This is the second of three articles on the Madhyamika school of Buddhism, the Mahayana school based on the teachings of emptiness and named for its adherence to the middle way. The school was founded by Nagarjuna in the second century AD and had a profound effect on the development of Buddhism in China and Tibet. This series is reprinted with permission of the Bodhicaryavatara Historical Project and based on a series of unpublished lectures by Fredrick J. Streng, Ph.D. (www.shantideva.net).

This work by Nâgârjuna continues on and on with such detailed analysis of many standard Buddhist key terms. In order to see the religious significance of that analysis, we must ask ourselves why he goes to all this bother? The answer is simply that the Buddha's path, which Nâgârjuna also claimed to follow, rests on knowing the nature of existence, its arising and dissolution. This means that one should know the true facts of how earthly life, including one's own self-awareness, are formed. It also means becoming sensitive to how one produces the images and concepts by which we know anything. At the same time, the perception of the truth about

life requires the development of an attitude which is calm but not slothful, which is vigorous but not agitated, which is insightful but is not attached to mental fabrications such as theories and doctrine. The detailed analysis of causal conditions as we find in the first chapter of Nâgârjuna's *Fundamentals of the Middle Way* is an expression of the concern to overcome ignorance, to avoid the illusory judgments that seem so habitual and prominent in daily life.

The role of cognition, of perception, and of emotional responses to sensation is seen early in the Buddhist tradition and continues into the Mâdhyamika school.

You will recall the first verses of the famous text, *The Dhammapada*, where the Buddha is recorded as saying:

***We are what we think,
Having become what we thought.
Like the wheel that follows the
cart-pulling ox
Sorrow follows an evil thought.
And joy follows a pure thought,
Like a shadow faithfully tailing a man.
We are what we think,
Having become what we thought.***

The Buddha's path was meant to be an elimination of suffering. This is a suffering caused by often unrecognized impulses arising from social, psychological and physical experiences. The living process of common everyday existence is seen as a burning fire fed by the fuel of actions that are based on involuntary desires and anxieties. These desires and anxieties themselves are conditioned by the way people think, perceive, and experience life in terms of their own selfhood. The enlightened person, the one who is truly awake to the nature of one's process of becoming-in-existence, knows that without getting behind the apparent form a person will just create more chaos. Without avoiding the habits of thinking and feeling that bring about fear and anger, there will be only continued suffering. As long as there is a concern only to improve an illusory self or to seek after illusory happiness a person will continue to be disappointed. Part of the problem is that there are deeply ingrained patterns of guilt, restlessness, self-hatred and apathy which lead a person to reinforce patterns of experience that lead to suffering.

The helplessness that so many people feel from the driving forces which compel them have to be recognized—according to the Buddhist view—as being produced by one's own ignorance and desire. Desire to attain short-term, illusory goals, which is the same thing as compulsive behavior, is dependent on ignorance (*avijā* or *avidyā*) in which one fails to view the impermanence and substancelessness of existence.

In the Buddhist view human beings are driven by unconscious motives; but unlike many contemporary psychologists, Nāgārjuna regarded these motives as controllable. These unconscious motives which cause suffering are prominent not only among psychotics but among all unenlightened human beings -- which means most of us. If we want to be free from suffering we have to see how we are constructing the bondage which we feel we are in. This bondage includes our wants, interests, strivings, and desires; and the Buddhist path requires insight into their conditioning causes. As you know, however, if you have read about Nāgārjuna's claim that all things are empty, these conditioning causes also are regarded as empty.

Our purpose here is to explore why a perception of the emptiness of causes and actions is an important religious concern. Briefly, we can say that the basic religious problem is to come to terms with the mental and emotional attachments that lead to more pain in the flow of existence. By bringing the nature of this pain before the mind, the attachments which arise in relation to the illusory awareness of our existence can be eliminated. The person who knows the source of his or her anger, the source of his or her fear, the source of his or her ambiguities can correct the problem. As the energies that we use in craving after certain desires are dissipated, our minds discriminate less and less between things as if they had self-sufficient importance or value. By recognizing that all conditioned phenomena are empty of self-nature, we empty the binding energies through which we lose the power to become enriched. When insight dissipates false images of expectations and desires, the heat of greed and hate are cooled.

The attachments that cause suffering arise from ignorance. This ignorance is something more than a lack of information or an inaccurate description of something.

***If we
want to be
free from
suffering we
have to see
how we are
constructing
the bondage
which we feel
we are in.***



It is systemic; that is, it is inherent in the very system or procedure that one uses to know life. It involves not being aware of the power that images, words and concepts have to bind a person to them. The insight that frees one from this process is also a releasing energy whereby one is no longer caught, or one no longer catches oneself, in the conceptual net and the expectations of one-to-one correlations between a word and some non-verbal referent.

...our words and language can generate the expectation of entities that are totally nonexistent.

We can begin to see the problem that Nâgârjuna was dealing with when we recognize a fairly simple thing: our words and language can generate the expectation of entities that are totally nonexistent. Human beings can use language in such a way that the words can be meaningful while at the same time they are mere fabrications of the mind. We can, for example, refer to a square circle, or to the son of a barren woman, or to the horn of a rabbit. We can extend a notion of a particular thing to a generalized notion. For example, we can extend the awareness of a single, concrete human being to "humanity." Or we can extend the notion of a "good" act to "perfect goodness." Or we can create new notions that do not refer to direct experiences by negating a general principle such as "limitation" or "finitude" and thereby derive the notions of "unlimited reality" or "infinity."



These words that indicate immaterial verbal entities are meaningful expressions since they share with other expressions certain grammatical properties and leave us with an impression of some possibility. This turns out to be a very curious thing when we recognize that many other terms or words function by pointing out objects or calling objects to our attention. Words seem to carve out remembered experience by defining and manifesting general forms or characteristics of the world to us. A name

is said to indicate something or a term specifies something. Thus, if I say the word "egg" you can immediately have an image of an egg in mind. My guess is, however, that if we would go around a room to see what the image of the egg is which you have in mind by drawing it on a piece of paper, we would have almost as many images drawn as we have people in the room.

The fact that words refer to general classes of things and to specific phenomena leaves us with the fascinating question of whether the term, e.g. "egg" as a general classification, has a meaning because it refers to some essence that pertains to each of the images that we have or whether the term is meaningful simply because we have learned to use the term in a certain way. As in Western schools of philosophy, there were in India some schools, e.g. the Nyâyâ school, that held that universals, like "egg-ness," which referred to a common element in all eggs, had as their universal reality some kind of objective basis or characteristic. The Buddhists, on the other hand, held that "universals" or general class terms are fictions, but they can be objects of propositions and can serve as subjects in order to function in popular, conventional communication.

For the Buddhists, the fact that the general term "egg" could be used knowledgeably by a variety of people whose specific experiences could be quite different indicated that they fabricated certain ideas and notions in order to communicate key easily identified aspects of specific experiences. They did not agree that the general property that can be specified as "egg-ness" is some timeless objective reality which is present in all individual eggs. For the Buddhists a general term simply distinguishes a particular class of items from another class of items. It does not indicate that there is some kind of universal reality that is found in multiple forms. By focusing on exactly these problems of the formation of ideas and

human expectations that words identify and give form to certain perceptions and aspects of our experience, the Buddhists were pointing out how many people, unaware, were being pushed in a particular direction by the very language and assumptions of language that they thought were helping them understand their existence.

The issue of identifying objects in our common experience, however, is not simply a matter of the use of language. It also is related to the question of what we really perceive when we see something. There is a common view that human beings directly perceive physical objects -- that is, material things -- which are external to themselves. For example, we talk about seeing a tree, a chair, a building, or another person, and then act and talk as if these things existed as such. Thus, visually and in other ways we act as if properties such as color or form or weight belong to, or reside in, things that are external to us.

Similarly, most of us act and feel most of the time as if we were centered “selves.” We experience life as “belonging” to a “person.” For example, I can remember things that happened to “me”, but I cannot remember things that happened to other people even though they may have entered my sphere of experience by talking to me or by responding to me when I saw them or touched them. This experience tends to separate the identity that we feel as an ego, an “I” or “me,” from other people; we distinguish between ourselves as if we were entities separate from our environmental experience, both physical and social.

Already the earliest Buddhist suttas contain the recognition that this naive-real sensitivity to things must be questioned. By “naive reality” I mean regarding things as if they existed as material entities, or ourselves as independent entities. The assumption about naively real physical things was called into question with the doctrine of the anatta, that is, non-individual soul. The individual person was seen to be not a single thing or an essence that had a variety of changing forms throughout life, but

was an interaction of various factors -- factors that belonged to what we would call internal and external phenomena.

While in our daily conversations, we may say things like, “I see that chair,” or, “I see that tree,” the Buddhists from the beginning suggested that it was not the case that a material body or entity saw or perceived another material body or entity. Rather, perception is actually a construction, or mental-emotional-physical synthesis that includes memory, inference, sensation, and synthetic apprehension through consciousness. Any perception was seen as a combination of various factors; for example, one classification included the following three factors: the object of sight, e.g., a tree, the sensitivity of the eye (that is, the power of sight which in physical terms we correlate with the eye and the optic nerve), and an act of sight-consciousness.

The tree or chair as a datum of experience should not be mistaken for some kind of external entity as such, or as a “whole.” What we actually perceive are instantaneous energy-moments which we integrate into our experience that is also based on memory and inference; when we have sensation of dark brown length and green splashes on top, we interpret this as a tree. With a bit of reflection, we can see that when we perceive an object, we actually perceive only a part of it, only one side of it, and then we have to extend from our imagination, memory, or inference the other sides and interior as well as the function and purpose of what we perceive.

The recognition that human experience is a complex of interacting factors that are both internal and external to what we normally call “a person” led later Buddhists – the Abhidharma masters – to analyze the sutta material in light of their own meditation experiences by formulating and classifying various factors that we would now call psychological and physical factors of experience. Since they did not affirm a permanent essence within the person or a real general thing which we call the object of perception, they recognized

If
emptiness
is true,
then it
must apply
to our
own most
immediate
experience.





**...insight into
the nature of
things required
taking seriously
the very
processes by
which human
beings can
know anything.**

only a changing conglomerate of material, mental, and psychic factors of experience called dharmas. These factors, they claimed, interact to form the experienced world as we are aware of it in everyday living. All objects of perception or ideas are seen to be without independent bases of existence. Rather they are seen to arise in an interdependent or co-dependent way. The “arising of existence” which generally is also the arising of turmoil -- because it is influenced by illusion -- comes through these interdependent and reciprocal forces (dharmas) which find their roots in a person’s ignorant clinging to the objects that “he” or “she” unwittingly is fabricating!

In order to discuss and specify how each of these factors, or dharmas, arise in experience, there were elaborate classifications proposed in that section of the literature called the Abhidharma Pitaka. This was not a speculative concern: the intention was to eliminate the false assumptions that most people have when they deal with their feelings, anxieties, and frustrations. Originally the Abhidharma literature systematized the tenets found scattered in different sermons by the Buddha as an aid for instruction. In time it developed a technique of its own for analysis in which the nature of reality and the cause of suffering were organized and classified topically.

By way of example, we can look at the classification of names and phenomena found in the *Dharmasamgani*, according to the headings of the five groups or “heaps” (skandhas) of phenomena. Under matter we find such dharmas as earth, water, heat, and air; sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch; visible object, sound, scent; taste object, lightness of matter, malleability, accumulation, extension, impermanence. Under sensation are such factors of experience as happiness, unhappiness, depression, equanimity. Under perception, there is only one member of this group which is perception itself. Then, under the group of samskaras, which are impulses or forces, we would find concentration, energy, confidence, self-possession, understanding, right livelihood, wrong theory, wrong intention, self-respect, fear of blame, desire, non-desire,



non-aversion, aversion or non-delusion. Under the group called consciousness we find thought, mind, consciousness of sight, consciousness of hearing, consciousness of smell, consciousness of taste, consciousness of touch, and consciousness of mind. There is also an unproduced dharma which is a special form, namely nirodha, which means extinction or elimination (it is equal to nirvâna).

If we look at the Sarvastivada Abhidharma text called Jñâna Prasthana, we find a discussion of six causes of the arising of phenomena. These are, for example, a cause being conjoined with something else, or simultaneously existing, or the continuing unchangeable character of some element between two phenomena, or a universal cause which is an innate, morally significant tendency, or the result and instrumental cause. The concern of this discussion was to explain how a combination of various conditions and forces could combine in any given instantaneous moment to produce the sensations of experience which we call life. By penetrating into the process of becoming, every monk, as the Buddha before him, could reverse the process of pain and construction and then be released from this continuing process. To do this it was important to know the marks, or signs, characteristics, and inherent character, the “own-being” (svabhava), of the factors that made up existence and then to contemplate these various characteristics.

In light of this great concern by the Abhidharma masters for classifying the factors of existence and then contemplating the particular self-existent characteristics, Nâgârjuna’s claim that all dharmas are empty of essential characteristics of self-sufficient reality is a dramatic shift in spiritual effort. Nâgârjuna’s first verses, with which we began this lecture, indicate that even the techniques and skills that were used to overcome a naive-realistic sense of the arising of existence could themselves become part of the pattern of thinking in which words functioned as if they referred to self-existent things. Nâgârjuna analyzed the teaching of the Abhidharma from the perspective that all ideas and all perceptions are constructs that depend on other constructed things. By

formulating his stanzas in direct opposition to the assumption of inherent characteristics and the own-being of particular instantaneous phenomena, he tried to overcome what he felt was the attachment to those factors which were themselves intended to break down naive thinking.

Thus, when he says in verse 3 of chapter two in *The Fundamentals of the Middle Way*, “Certainly there is no self-existence of existing things..., and if no self-existence exists, neither does ‘other-existence,’” he is then declaring that we can fall into a bifurcating way of conceiving the world of “self” and “other” even in the most intense religious practices. In chapter three Nāgārjuna analyzes the dharma of “seeing” or “vision” as one of the six sense faculties:

There is no seer with vision or without vision; Therefore, if there is no seer how can there be vision and the object seen? As the birth of a son is said to occur presupposing a father and mother, Knowledge is said to occur presupposing the eye being dependent on the visible forms. Since the “object seen” and the vision do not exist there is no fourfold consequence: knowledge, cognitive sensation, affective sensation, and desire. Also, then, how will the acquisition of karma and its consequences [existence, birth, aging, and death] be produced?

Similarly, in chapter four of *The Fundamentals of the Middle Way*, Nāgārjuna denies the assumptions of the self-existence of the groups of factors (skandhas) when he says:

Visible form is not perceived without the basic cause of visible form; Likewise, the basic cause of visible form does not appear without a visible form. If the visible form existed apart from its basic cause, it would logically follow that visible form is without cause; But there is nothing anywhere arising without cause. On the other hand, if there would be a basic cause apart from visible form, The basic cause would be without any product; But there is no basic cause without a product. Just as when

there is a visible form, no basic cause of form obtains, So, when there is no visible form, no basic cause of form obtains.

Nāgārjuna then goes on, chapter by chapter, analyzing key notions – such as the irreducible elements (dhatus), desire and the one who desires, and constructed existence (sanskṛta) – until he also says that even nirvāṇa, which was classified under the unconditioned factor according to the Abhidharma, is not regarded as having a self-existence or an own-being.

Nāgārjuna says in chapter twenty-five:

There is nothing whatever which differentiates the existence-in-flux (samsara) from nirvāṇa; and there is nothing whatever which differentiates nirvāṇa from existence-in-flux.

Subsequent verses reinforce this denial of every absolute identification:

Since all dharmas are empty, what is finite? What is infinite? What is both finite and infinite? What is neither finite nor infinite? Is there anything which is this or something else, which is permanent or impermanent, Which is both permanent and impermanent, or which is neither?

In summary, then, we can see that from Nāgārjuna’s perspective, language and naive experience are themselves possible vehicles for erroneous understanding of ourselves and our experience. This does not mean that Nāgārjuna himself discarded language or even logic. It did mean that insight into the nature of things required taking seriously the very processes by which human beings can know anything. It means that one should always be aware that even the most profound attempts to interpret the meaning of life may lead to an inappropriate fixation on their meaning. In the next lecture we will look at the process whereby Nāgārjuna hoped to avoid having his hearers focus on the word “emptiness” as if it were a thing-in-itself.



THE FIVE SPIRITUAL FACULTIES



Spiritual progress depends on the emergence of five cardinal virtues:

FAITH,
VIGOR,
MINDFULNESS,
CONCENTRATION
AND WISDOM.

The first is presented here. The remaining four faculties will be presented in future issues.

By Edward M. Conze

Our conduct as “worldlings” is governed by our sense-based instincts and impulses. As we progress, new spiritual forces gradually take over, until in the end the five cardinal virtues dominate and shape everything we do feel and think. These virtues are called, in Sanskrit and Pali, indriya, variously translated as faculties, controlling faculties, or spiritual faculties. The same five virtues are called powers (bala) if emphasis is on the fact that they are “unshakable by their opposites.”



1. FAITH

Faith is called “the seed,” and without it the plant of spiritual life cannot start at all. Without faith one can, as a matter of fact, do nothing worthwhile at all. This is true not only of Buddhism, but of all religions, and even the pseudo-religions of modern times, such as Communism. And this faith is much more than the mere acceptance of beliefs. It requires the combination of four factors — intellectual, volitional, emotional and social.

1. Intellectually, faith is an assent to doctrines which are not substantiated by immediately available direct factual evidence. To be a matter of faith, a belief must go beyond the available evidence and the believer must be willing and ready to fill up the gaps in the evidence with an attitude of patient and trusting acceptance. Faith, taken in this sense, has two opposites, i.e., a dull unawareness of the things which are worth believing in, and doubt or perplexity. In any kind of religion some assumptions are taken on trust and accepted on the authority of scriptures or teachers.

Generally speaking, faith is, however, regarded as only a preliminary step, as a merely provisional state. In due course direct spiritual awareness will know that which faith took on trust, and longed to know: “Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.” Much time must usually elapse before the virtue of wisdom has become strong enough to support a vigorous insight into the true nature of reality. Until then quite a number of doctrinal points must be taken on faith.

What then in Buddhism are the objects of faith? They are essentially four:

(1) the belief in karma and rebirth

(2) the acceptance of the basic teachings about the nature of reality, such as conditioned co-production, emptiness, etc.

(3) confidence in the “three refuges,” the Buddha, the dharma and the order.

(4) a belief in the efficacy of the prescribed practices, and in nirvana as the final way out of our difficulties. I shall say more about them when I have dealt with the other aspects of faith.

2. In this skeptical age we, anyway, dwell far too much on the intellectual side of faith. Shraddha (Pali: saddha) the word we render as “faith,” is etymologically akin to Latin cor, “the heart,” and faith is far more a matter of the heart than of the intellect. It is, as Prof. Radhakrishnan incisively puts it, the “striving after self-realization by concentrating the powers of the mind on a given idea.” Volitionally, faith implies a resolute and courageous act of will. It combines the steadfast resolution that one

will do a thing with the self-confidence that one can do it. Suppose that people living on the one side of a river are doomed to perish from many enemies, diseases and famine. Safety lies on the other shore. The man of faith is then likened to the person who swims across the river, braving its dangers, saving himself and inspiring others by his example. Those without faith will go on dithering along the hither bank. The opposites to this aspect of faith are timidity, cowardice, fear, wavering, and a shabby, mean and calculating mentality.

3. Emotionally, faith is an attitude of serenity and lucidity. Its opposite here is worry, the state of being troubled by many things. It is said that someone who has faith loses the “five terrors,” i.e., he ceases to worry about the necessities of life, about loss of reputation, death, unhappy rebirth and the impression he may make on an audience. It is fairly obvious that the burden of life must be greatly lightened by belief in karma, emptiness, or not-self. Even an unpleasant fate can be accepted more easily when it is understood as a dispensation of justice, when vexations are explained as an inevitable retribution, when law seems to rule instead of blind chance, when even apparent loss is bound to turn into true gain. And if there is no self, what and whom do we worry about? If there is only one vast emptiness, what is there to disturb our radiance?

4. Socially, and that is more difficult to understand, faith involves trust and confidence in the Buddha and the Sangha. Its opposite here is the state of being submerged in cares about one's

...if there is no self, what and whom do we worry about? If there is only one vast emptiness, what is there to disturb our radiance?

sensory social environment, cares which spring from either social pressure or social isolation. The break with the normal social environment is, of course, complete only in the case of the monk who, as the formula goes, “in faith forsakes his home.” To a lesser extent it must be carried out by every practitioner of the Dharma, who must “live apart” from his society, in spirit if not in fact. The company of others and the help we expect from them are usually a mainstay of our sense of security. By going for refuge to the Buddha and the Sangha one turns from the visible and tangible to the invisible and elusive. By placing one’s reliance on spiritual forces one gains the strength to disregard public opinion and social discouragement. Some measure of defiant contempt for the world and its ways is inseparable from a spiritual life.

The spiritual man does not “belong” to his visible environment, in which he is bound to feel rather a stranger. He belongs to the community of the saints, to the family of the Buddha. Buddhism substitutes a spiritual for the natural environment, with the Buddha for the father, the Prajnaparamita for the mother, the fellow-seekers for brothers and sisters, relatives and friends. It is with these more invisible forces that one must learn to establish satisfactory social relations. In carrying out this task, faith requires a considerable capacity for renunciation.

Like other spiritual qualities, faith is somewhat paradoxical in that in one sense it is a gift which one cannot obtain by merely wanting to, and in another sense it is a virtue that can be cultivated. The capacity for faith varies with the constitution of the individual and his social

circumstances. It is usual to classify types of personality according to whether they are dominated by greed, hatred or confusion. Those who walk in greed are said to be more susceptible to faith than the other two, because of the kinship which exists between faith and greed. To quote Buddhaghosa (Visuddhimagga III,75): “As on the unwholesome plane greed clings and takes no offense, so faith on the wholesome plane. As greed searches for objects of sense-desire, so faith for the qualities of morality, etc. As greed does not let go that which is harmful, so faith does not let go that which is beneficial.”

As regards social conditions, there are ages of faith and ages of unbelief. The present age rather fosters unbelief. It puts a premium on intellectual smartness, so that faith is easily held to indicate nothing but a weak head or a lack of intellectual integrity. It multiplies the distractions from the sensory world to such an extent that the calm of the invisible world is harder to reach than ever. It exposes the citizen to so great a variety of conflicting viewpoints that he finds it hard to make a choice. The prestige of science, the concern with a high standard of living, and the disappearance of all institutions of uncontested authority are the chief foes of faith in our present-day society. It is largely a matter of temperament whether we believe that matters will improve in the near future.

As a virtue, faith is strengthened and built up by self-discipline, and not by discussing opinions. Intellectual difficulties are by no means the most powerful among the obstacles to faith. Doubts are inevitable,

By going for refuge to the Buddha and the Sangha one turns from the visible and tangible to the invisible and elusive.

but how one deals with them depends on one's character. The first of our four "articles of faith" well illustrates this situation. There are many sound reasons for accepting the rebirth doctrine. This is not the place to expound them, and I must be content to refer the reader to the very impressive *East-West Anthology on Reincarnation* which J. Head and S.L. Cranston have published in 1961 (New York, The Julian Press Inc.). Yet, although belief in rebirth is perfectly rational and does not conflict with any known fact, the range of the average person's vision is so limited that he has no access to the decisive evidence, which is direct and immediate experience.

The rebirth doctrine assumes at least two things: (1) that behind the natural causality which links together events in the world of sense there are other, invisible chains of a moral causality, which assures that all good acts are rewarded, all bad actions punished; and (2) that this chain of moral sequences is not interrupted by death, but continues from rebirth to rebirth. To the average person these two assumptions cannot be proved absolutely, conclusively and beyond the possibility of a doubt. However plausible they may seem on rational grounds, Buddhism teaches that they become a matter of direct experience only after the "superknowledges" (*abhijñā*, *abhiññā*) have been developed. The fourth "superknowledge" is the recollection of one's own previous rebirths, and the fifth the knowledge of the rebirths of other people, by which one "sees that whatever happens to them happens in accordance with their deeds." There are many well-authenticated cases of persons spontaneously remembering

certain details of one or the other of their own previous lives, and these people obviously have an additional reason for belief in rebirth which is lacking in those who cannot recall ever having lived before. Full certitude on the issue is, however, given to those only who can, on the basis of the fourth jhana and by taking definite prescribed and disciplined steps on emerging from that jhana, "recall their manifold former lives," according to the well-known formula: "There I was, that was my name, that was my family, that was my caste, such was my food, this was the happiness, this the suffering which I experienced, this was the duration of my life-span. Deceased there I was born elsewhere and there had this name, etc." When a monk has practiced properly and successfully, "these things become as clear to him as if lit up by a lamp" (*Visuddhimagga*, xiii, 23).

Until that time comes, we cannot claim that we fully know the doctrine of karma and rebirth to be true. We take it partly on faith. And this faith of ours is maintained less by our dialectical skill as by the virtues of patience and courage. For we must be willing to wait patiently until we are spiritually ripe for the emergence of the super-knowledges, however far off that might seem to be. And secondly, we must be willing to take risks. Life nowhere offers a one hundred per cent security, and for our convictions least of all. Employed in gaining wealth a merchant must risk his property. Employed in taking life, a soldier must risk his own life. Employed in saving his soul, the spiritual man must risk his own soul. The stake automatically increases with the prospect of gain. Of course, we may be mistaken. I



sometimes wonder what I would think if, on dying, I would not, as I now fondly imagine, wake up on the Bardo plane, but find myself confronted with Acheron and the three-headed Cerberus, or, worse still, were ill-treated with fire and brimstone in a Christian hell. The experience would, I admit, be rather disconcerting. All that I can say in the face of such uncertainty is that I am willing to take the consequences, and that I hope that my fund of boldness, audacity and good humor will not run out.

One has the choice to magnify intellectual doubts, or to minimize them. It seems not unreasonable that one should blame the difficulties of the teaching on one's own distance from the truth, one's own intellectual and moral imperfections. How can one expect to remember one's past lives, if at present one cannot even recall hour by hour what one did during one single day a mere month ago? If one hesitates to accept, as not immediately obvious, the doctrine that this world is the result of ignorance and of the craving of non-existent individuals for non-existent objects—is this not perhaps due to the very denseness of one's own ignorance, for which one can collect plenty of proofs all day long? Doubts are effectively overcome when one purifies one's own life, so as to become more worthy of knowledge. It is a condition of all learning that one accepts a great deal on trust, that one gives the teacher the benefit of the doubt. Otherwise one can learn nothing at all, and remains shut out from all truth. To have faith means to take a deep breath, to tear oneself away from the daily cares and concerns, and to turn resolutely to a wider and more abiding reality. At first we are, by ourselves, too stupid and inexperienced to see the tracks which lead to salvation. So we must put our trust in the sages of the past, and listen intently to their words, dimmed by distance and the noise of the present day, but still just audible.

One last word about tolerance, without which faith remains raw and unsure of itself. It is a perpetual trial to our faith that we should constantly meet with people who believe differently. We are easily tempted to wish this irritant removed, to coerce others, if only by argument, and to annihilate them, if only by dubbing them fools. Intolerance for people of other faiths, though often mistaken for ardor, betrays nothing so much as doubts within oneself. We can, of course, always console ourselves by assuming that the others, in their own way, believe what we do, and that in the end it all comes to the same thing. But that does not always sound very convincing, and what we must, I am afraid, learn to do is to bear with their presence.

EDWARD CONZE was born in London in 1904. From 1933 until 1960 he lectured in psychology, philosophy and comparative religion at London and Oxford Universities. Between 1963 and 1973. He authored numerous books on Buddhist and was a prolific translator of the prajna (wisdom) literature. Edward Conze died in 1979.



THE 51 ATTRIBUTES OF THE MIND

From *Abhidharma Samuccaya**

A Compilation by *Xianyang Carl Jerome*

The Yogacara School, the school from which Chan (Zen) arose, classifies our psychological responses into six categories with fifty-one attributes. Noticing unwholesome activities, so that we can practice with them and transform them and ourselves, is a central teaching of the Buddha. It allows us to transform our everyday lives, moment by moment, from uncomfortable and uneasy (*dukkha*) to progressively more peaceful and tranquil (*nirvana*). Ultimately, it moves us from deluded to awakened.

5

BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS:

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CONTACT, ATTENTION, FEELING, IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS.

5

DELIBERATELY CREATED MENTAL CONDITIONS:

ASPIRATION, COMPREHENSION, MEMORY, CONCENTRATION AND WISDOM.

11

WHOLESOME PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES:

TRUST, DILIGENCE, HUMILITY, REMORSE, NO GREED, NO HATRED, NO IGNORANCE, TRANQUILITY, ATTENTIVENESS, EQUANIMITY, AND NO HARM.

6

ROOT AFFLICTIONS:

GREED, HATRED, IGNORANCE, ARROGANCE, DOUBT AND INCORRECT VIEW.

20

UNWHOLESOME PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES:

ANGER, HOSTILITY, IRRITATION, CONCEIT, DECEIT, FLATTERY, ARROGANCE, MALICE, JEALOUSY, STINGINESS, NO REMORSE, NO REGRET, NO TRUST, LAZINESS, INSENSITIVITY, APATHY, AGITATION, FORGETFULNESS, INCORRECT PERCEPTION AND HEEDLESSNESS.

4

NEUTRAL STATES OF MIND:

REMORSE, SLEEPINESS, APPLIED THOUGHT AND SUSTAINED THOUGHT.

These attributes are a breakdown, a categorization of our mental states, by the great 2nd century bodhisattva, Asanga: scholar monk, abhidharmist, and co-founder, with his half-brother Vasubandhu, of the Yogacara School. Legend has it that Asanga received his teachings directly from Maitreya Buddha after his compassion led him to cut a piece of flesh off his body and feed a sick and dying dog.

* *The Abhidharma Samuccaya* (by Asanga, translated into French by Walpola Rahula, translated into English from the French by Sara Boin-Webb, Asian Humanities Press, \$75) is one of the most important Mahayana abhidharma texts, containing all the main teachings of the Mahayana and summarizing all the works of Asanga. It is written using the traditional Pali abhidharma structure of posing a question and then answering it.

SIMPLY DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE; THIS IS CHAN.

A STUDENT ONCE ASKED HIS TEACHER, "MASTER, WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?" THE MASTER REPLIED, "WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY, EAT. WHEN YOU'RE TIRED, SLEEP."

JOSHU ASKED NANSEN: "WHAT IS THE PATH?" NANSEN SAID: "EVERYDAY LIFE IS THE PATH."

ONE MORNING, WHILE THE HEAD COOK WAS BUSY PREPARING LUNCH, MANJUSHRI, THE WISDOM BODHISATTVA, SUDDENLY APPEARED IN THE RICE POT OF THE HEAD COOK.

"GO AWAY," SHOUTED THE COOK, "GET OUT OF THERE! I NEED TO FINISH MAKING THE RICE," BUT MANJUSHRI CONTINUED TO APPEAR IN THE POT. FINALLY, THE COOK HIT MANJUSHRI SQUARELY ON THE HEAD WITH HIS STIRRING SPOON AND DROVE HIM AWAY, SAYING, "EVEN IF YOU WERE SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA, I WOULD HAVE HIT YOU."

A YOUNG MONK, HAVING JUST ARRIVED AT A NEW MONASTERY, GOES TO THE ABBOT AFTER BREAKFAST AND SAYS, "I HAVE JUST ARRIVED, I AM HERE TO BE YOUR STUDENT, WHAT SHOULD I DO?"

THE ABBOT LOOKS AT HIM AND SAYS,

"HAVE YOU FINISHED BREAKFAST?"

"YES," SAYS THE NOVICE MONK.

"THEN GO WASH YOUR BOWL."

A BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE VILLAGE WAS PREGNANT. HER ANGRY PARENTS DEMANDED TO KNOW WHO WAS THE FATHER. AT FIRST RESISTANT TO CONFESS, THE ANXIOUS AND EMBARRASSED GIRL FINALLY POINTED TO HAKUIN, THE ZEN MASTER WHOM EVERYONE REVERED FOR LIVING SUCH A PURE LIFE. THE OUTRAGED PARENTS CONFRONTED HAKUIN WITH THEIR DAUGHTER'S ACCUSATION; HE SIMPLY REPLIED "IS THAT SO?"

WHEN THE CHILD WAS BORN, THE PARENTS BROUGHT IT TO THE HAKUIN, WHO NOW WAS VIEWED AS A PARIAH BY THE WHOLE VILLAGE. THEY DEMANDED THAT HE TAKE CARE OF THE CHILD SINCE IT WAS HIS RESPONSIBILITY. "IS THAT SO?" HAKUIN SAID CALMLY AS HE ACCEPTED THE CHILD.

FOR MANY MONTHS HE TOOK VERY GOOD CARE OF THE CHILD UNTIL THE DAUGHTER COULD NO LONGER LIVE WITH THE LIE SHE HAD TOLD. SHE CONFESSED THAT THE REAL FATHER WAS A YOUNG MAN IN THE VILLAGE WHOM SHE HAD TRIED TO PROTECT. THE PARENTS IMMEDIATELY WENT TO HAKUIN. WITH PROFUSE APOLOGIES THEY EXPLAINED WHAT HAD HAPPENED. "IS THAT SO?" HAKUIN SAID AS HE HANDED THEM THE BABY.



MABA The Mid-America Buddhist Association

MABA is a Chan Buddhist monastery located on 60-acres of secluded woodland in the rolling hills of Missouri, about 45 minutes west of St. Louis.

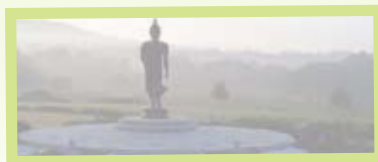
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There are many ways to practice virtue, many ways to explain wisdom, and many ways to meditate in Buddhism. Our aim is to present the essential teachings of the Buddhadharma from various viewpoints and in a manner that we hope will be of benefit to our readers.

"In our practice we must have right view. If our view is right, then everything else is right: right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right recollection, right concentration — the whole *eightfold path*. When there is right view, everything else falls into place naturally." —Ajahn Chah





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